CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ii
Abbreviations iii
List of figures iv
List of tables vi

Introduction 1
1. Mycenaean Greece and the collapse 4
2. Collapse theory 18
3. Theories of Mycenaean collapse 31
4. The processes of collapse 54
5. Settlements and population mobility in the postpalatial period 68
6. Postpalatial rulership, elites and social structure 92
7. Conclusions 113

Bibliography 123
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1 Although I have made use of preliminary copies, these papers have now been published in the latest volume of *Aegaeum* and are thus referred to by their publication date (2007).

2 French forthcoming.
ABBREVIATIONS

AA Archäologischer Anzeiger
AEA Aegean Archaeology
AJA American Journal of Archaeology
AM Ancient Mesoamerica
AmAnt American Antiquity
AmAnth American Anthropologist
AR Archaeological Reports
ARA Annual Review of Anthropology
AS Anatolian Studies
BCH Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
BIAL Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology
BICS Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies
BSA Annual of the British School at Athens
CA Current Anthropology
CQ The Classical Quarterly, New Series
CR Classical Review, New Series
EHR The English Historical Review
EJA European Journal of Archaeology
G&R Greece & Rome, 2nd series
IJNA The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology
JAR Journal of Archaeological Research
JAS Journal of Archaeological Science
JESHO Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JFA Journal of Field Archaeology
JHS Journal of Hellenic Studies
JMA Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology
JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRZM Jahrbuch des Römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz
JWP Journal of World Prehistory
MAA Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry
NEA Near Eastern Archaeology
OCD The Oxford Classical Dictionary (3rd edition revised (2003))
OJA Oxford Journal of Archaeology
OpAth Opuscula Atheniensia
PBSR Papers of the British School at Rome
PCPS Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society
PPS Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society
SMEA Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici
SO Symbolae Osloenses
WA World Archaeology

EIA Early Iron Age
G Geometric
LBA Late Bronze Age
LH Late Helladic
MH Middle Helladic
PG Protogeometric
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Hypothesised locations of Ahhiyawa. Source: Niemeier 1998, 20 Figure 3 and 22 Figure 4.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Pylos Battle Scene Fresco. Source: Drews 1993, 141 Plate 2.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>LBA Anatolia and the Near East. Source: Bryce 2002, Map 1.</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Terminal Classic Maya regions and major sites with approximate order of collapse/transition. Source: Demarest 2004, 227 Figure 9.10.</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Sites and cemeteries of LHIIIB (top) and LHIIIC (bottom). Source: Popham 1994, 282-283.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Ships on LHIIIC pottery. (a) Tragana (b) Kynos and (c) Bademgediği Tepe. Sources: Mountjoy 1999, 357-358 (132); Raanlub 1999, 201 Plate 2; Mountjoy 2005, Plate XCVI.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Plan of Koukounaries, Paros, with Mycenaean building shown in black. Source: Schilardi 1984, 185.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Plan of the acropolis of Ayios Andreas, Siphnos. Source: Televantou 2001, 193 Figure 2.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Plan of north-east acropolis area (a). Outer wall (b). Source: Televantou 2001, 196 Figure 4, 201 Figure 7.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Xoburgo, Tenos. View from south-west (a). Topographical plan (b). Source: Televantou 2001, 174 Figure 3, 175 Figure 4.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Kanakia, Salamis. Sources: <a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4853332.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4853332.stm</a> (a); AR 2004, 9 Figure 23 (b).</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>East and West Shrines at Phylakopi (a). 3 LHIIIC phases of the Temple at Ayia Irini (b). Sources: Mountjoy 1993, 154 Figure 378; Caskey 1984, 249 Figure 7.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Excavated remains of Grotta, Naxos, Towns 1 (LHIIIA-B2) and 2 (LHIIIC). Source: Vlachopoulos 2003, 219 Figure 2.</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Principal findspots of HMB pottery (a). Findspots of Pseudominyan ware (b). Sources: Rutter 1990, 49; Kilian 1988a, 126 Figure 7.</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>Asine (a) and Houses F-H (b). Sources: <a href="http://www.sia.gr/research/excavation_detail.asp?qID=145">http://www.sia.gr/research/excavation_detail.asp?qID=145</a>; Thomatos 2006, 196 Figure 3.16.</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>Sites in Corinthia (a) Late Mycenaean (b) LHIIIC. Source: Morgan 1999, 480 Figure 15.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>Korakou, House P. Source Thomatos 2006, 198 Figure 3.19.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>Sites in the Euboean Gulf Region (a) LHI-IIIB (b) LHIIIC. Source: Crielaard 2006, 275 Figure 14.1.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>Lefkandi phase 1 (a) and phase 2 (b). Source: Popham and Sackett 1968 Figure 12.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.16 Perati. Source: Iakovides 1970, 44.

6.1 The citadel of Tiryns in LHIIIB2 and LHIIIC. Source: Kilian 1988a, 132 Figure 9.

6.2 Building T, Tiryns. Source: Wright 2006, 40 Figure 1.16a.

6.3 Midea megaron (a). Korakou, House L (b). Sources: Walberg 1995, 88, Figure 1; Wright 2006, 40 Figure 1.16b.

6.4 LHIIIC activity at Mycenae (top). Mycenae, Palace IV (bottom). Source: French 2002, 136, Figure 64; French 2002, 137 Figure 65.

6.5 LHIIIC warrior tombs on the mainland (top) and in the Aegean (bottom). Source: Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 154-155, Figures 9.2 and 9.3.

6.6 Warrior burial at Krini chamber tomb 3. Bronze sword in scabbard (top); bronze decoration on scabbard (middle); bronze spearhead (bottom). Source: Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, 175 Figure 3, 181 Figure 6 and 183 Figure 7.

6.7 Chamber tomb 3, Krini. Four burials including a warrior burial (D). Source: Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, 174 Figure 2.


6.9 Tumulus at Argos, Tripolis Street (a & b). Khania tumulus, near Mycenae (c). Sources: Thomatos 2006, 151-152 Figures 2.2 and 2.3; French 2002 Plate 21.

6.10 Central Greece. Source: Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 40 Figure 1.

6.11 The palace at Dimini, LHIIIA2 to LHIIIC Early. Source: Adrimi-Sismani 2006, 469 Figure 25.2.

6.12 Mitrou, now an island but formerly connected to the mainland. Source: Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 41 Figure 2.

6.13 Plan of Mitrou showing various phases including apsidal Building A, constructed over LHIIIC Building B. Source: Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 43 Figure 4.

6.14 Volos, Kazanaki tholos 7, with symbols. Source: AR 2005, 59 Figure 104.


6.16 Naxos Aplomata Tombs A and B (top) and Kamini Tomb A (bottom). Source: Thomatos 2006, 160-161 Figures 2.16 and 2.18.
LIST OF TABLES

3.1 Evidence for Earthquakes at Mycenae in LHIIIB and LHIIIC. Source: Nur and Cline 2000. 53

3.2 Likely factors involved in the collapse, according to recent publications. Sources: Deger-Jalkotzy 2008; Hall 2007, 51-55; Bennet 2006, 209; Dickinson 2006a, 43-56. 53
INTRODUCTION

This monograph deals with the destruction and disappearance of the palaces and palace societies of Late Bronze Age or Mycenaean Greece c.12001 and aspects of continuity and change in the subsequent Postpalatial period of the twelfth and eleventh centuries (LHIIIIC). For reasons set out below, it is primarily concerned with mainland Greece and the islands but not with Crete, which deserves separate treatment.

Much scholarly attention has been devoted to understanding the precise nature of the events and processes at work in this period, and it may rightly be wondered why another study is necessary. In fact there are several reasons. The archaeological evidence itself continues to increase, providing more data and allowing more precise interpretations, and existing data continue to be refined and interpreted. New discoveries and sites, and continued work at known sites, can radically alter our understanding of the period, as has been shown at Tiryns, Kanakia and Mitrou. Theoretical approaches also change. Migration theory is now largely discredited in Aegean archaeology, as is the status of later Greek myths as historical evidence for the LBA and postpalatial period.

The simple equation of pots and peoples has been rejected and the more complex relationships of people and groups with, and their active use and manipulation of, material culture are now admitted. Changes in the way collapse is understood as a political and social process, reflected in material culture, within diverse and dynamic living societies have forced a move away from monolithic and simplistic theories of collapse. Individuals and groups are increasingly recognised as active participants in society with diverse motivations rather than being passive victims of processes or events, and instances of collapse can also be seen as periods of social reorganisation or transformation involving the formation of new groups and the active formation of new identities. These changes suggest that there is scope for further examination of this period.

This research was directly inspired by two things. The first was my introduction to Mycenaean Greece during the 27th British School at Athens Undergraduate Summer School, and our visits to Thebes, Orchomenos, Gla, Mycenae, Tiryns and Pylos. I wondered at the society of these other Greeks, how it was related to the later, more familiar Greek culture, and how and why it had disappeared. The second was my reading of a paper by Bryan Ward-Perkins (1997) ‘Continuitists, catastrophists and the towns of Post-Roman North Italy’. This paper explored the difficulties of evaluating continuity or discontinuity at urban sites and showed how a variety of very different interpretations could be constructed. These often depended on the approach taken to the evidence, archaeological, textual or a combination, where emphasis was placed, and even the nationality and intellectual tradition, as well as the theoretical position of the scholar, could make a difference. These ideas had clear implications for identifying, interpreting and understanding the collapse of Mycenaean Greece and what followed it, for which there are many competing theories.

An emphasis in this work, where analysis of the Greek material itself or theories based upon it is attempted, is the potential for differences between palatial and non-palatial areas. Of course the term Postpalatial has a chronological and social meaning, but it has been applied to areas that never were palatial, and in this way can be misleading. Although there were interconnections between palatial and non-palatial areas, the latter never directly experienced the collapse of the palatial system, and so the situation in those regions was qualitatively different. While the notion of core and periphery has become popular in Aegean archaeology, and some have begun to consider how these differences affected Postpalatial twelfth century Greece (e.g. Eder 2006), it is still common to find a basic assumption that even in non-palatial areas some aspects of twelfth century culture should be traceable back to palatial forms. This is notable in the discussion of rulership and the origins of the basileus of later Greece. While culture, material and otherwise, is not bounded by political borders, and non-palatial areas shared aspects of material and doubtless non-material culture with palatial areas, it is not necessary to suggest that supposedly peripheral regions should merely or simply emulate their palatial neighbours. Their inhabitants should be credited with more complex agendas suited to their local circumstances, making active use of culture as it suited them; after the palaces collapsed, they no-doubt went on doing this, albeit in different circumstances.

Something more must be said about the approach taken here. In the first place, I do not seek to offer a completely novel or original theory of the Mycenaean collapse, or to prove that one of the existing theories is correct and all the others are wrong. It is likely that arriving at the truth of what happened is an impossible task. Nor do I seek to exhaustively list, catalogue, describe and compare the material culture of LHIIIC Greece; this is not a traditional survey based work.2 Rather, I hope to offer a balanced and objective approach to Late Mycenaean society and to critically analyse the major collapse theories, placing them in the context of general collapse theory and recent developments in Mycenaean archaeology. I attempt to show why some theories may have more validity than others, and that in many cases there are in fact serious problems with the evidence. I take a broad interdisciplinary approach that includes historiography, social archaeology, the archaeology and history of parts of the Near East, Mesoamerica and Europe, as well as discussion and interpretation of Mycenaean archaeology itself. It is hoped that by using this wider approach, a

1 All dates are BC, unless otherwise indicated.

2 This approach has been recently taken for a few areas of Greece in LHIIIC Middle by Marina Thomatos (2006).
fuller understanding of LBA Greece, the Mycenaean collapse, and the Postpalatial period can be achieved.

Historical Analogy

This study will make use of historical analogy to suggest problems that may have faced the Mycenaean palace societies and contributed to their collapse. These are drawn from three historical cultures: the Hittites, the Classic Maya and the Western Roman Empire. Something must be said about the applicability and relevance of such analogies. In the first place, these societies all experienced collapse and all have been well-studied both individually and in general works on collapse. Of primary importance is the level and range of literary and textual evidence available from all three societies, which allows a far greater insight into the processes at work within them, as well as knowledge of specific events and problems that they encountered. Since the Homeric poems and evidence from Greek myth cannot be regarded as filling this gap, and in the absence of equivalent evidence from Mycenaean Greece itself, analogy is an appropriate method for illustrating potential difficulties facing the palace societies.

Of the societies chosen here, two differ greatly in size and complexity from the Mycenaean palace societies, and only the Maya polities could perhaps offer a general equivalence of scale, with independent yet interconnected and competing polities of differing significance within a zone of shared culture. Because of this, the Maya kingdoms may offer the best direct parallels for the Mycenaean palace states in terms of how they could have interacted, although that is not to say that collapse occurred for the same reasons of in the same way in both. Nevertheless, the differences are unimportant here, since the features the analogies are used to demonstrate are ones common to relationships between two central powers, central and local powers, and within central powers themselves. The commonality of such features between societies makes the argument for the applicability of analogy stronger.

Although the Hittite collapse is as problematic as that of the Mycenaean palace states, it occurred nearby and at around the same time, although possibly for quite different reasons; there is no need to connect the two, as many continue to do. The approach taken here is not concerned with explaining that collapse, but with using the evidence to illustrate actual difficulties that existed in successfully maintaining the integrity and existence of a LBA kingdom, albeit it one far bigger and more complex than any Mycenaean kingdom. While the collapse of the Western Roman Empire happened much later, and in a very different setting with its own unique characteristics, it is again the relationships between groups that are of primary interest. Through these relationships, illustrated by textual evidence and archaeology, the process of collapse and transformation can be observed as one in which people made active choices in response to specific phenomena.

Thus historical analogies are not used here to attempt to prove that the Mycenaean palace states collapsed for the same reasons as the Hittites, the Maya or the Western Roman Empire. The reasons behind these collapses and their processes remain contentious, and it is not the purpose of this work to seek to explain them. Rather they are used to illustrate real and common problems faced by polities that collapsed, and which, although not always evident, seem unlikely not to have affected the Mycenaean palace states. In all these cases, peoples, cultures and events may be historically specific and unique, but the similarity in processes, rooted as they are in quite basic human relationships and motivations, remain similar and make analogy a useful tool in fleshing out the late palatial period and the collapse of the Mycenaean palace states.

Crete

Crete must be considered as somewhat different to the rest of Greece, since it had developed its own palatial culture much earlier which itself eventually seems to have influenced or been adopted as an influence in areas of Mycenaean Greece (Wardle 1994, 204-217; Rutter 2001, 145-146). This palace system also came to an end in uncertain circumstances (Rehak and Younger 2001, 440-441). It seems that, in circumstances accompanied by widespread destructions, Knossos became the royal palace centre in LMIII where previously various centres had existed and some suggest Mycenaean involvement in this, although other reasons are equally plausible (Rehak and Younger 2001, 440-441; Bennet 1990, 209).

Mycenaean administrations using Linear B existed at Knossos and Chania in LMIII, although the dating of these is uncertain, with some placing the Knossos tablets earlier (LMIIIA1) and/or later (LMIIIA2-LMIIIB early), and the Chania tablets in LMIIIB. The final destruction of the palace at Knossos is thought by Popham to have occurred in early LMIIIA2, or according to the standard interpretation, later in LMIIIA2, while others place it in early in LMIIIB (Hood 1978, 25, 243 n.14; Rehak and Younger 2001, 384 n.5, 441-444, 452). The Linear B at Chania belongs in LMIIIA2-LMIIIB, which may show that it outlasted Knossos as a palace centre of some kind (Rehak and Younger 2001, 451; Dickinson 1994, 76).

While the evidence does show a Mycenaean presence of some kind in Crete, and the existence of polities that may have been independent or linked to mainland palaces, the continued presence of local Minoan traditions into the Postpalatial period suggests that ‘to term it ‘Mycenaean’ is incorrect’ (Dickinson 1994, 76 and 2006b, 116). Since what happened on Crete in the years down to c.1200 and in the twelfth century deserves a more detailed treatment than can be offered here, it will not be a focus of this work.

2 Tartaron (2008, 132-134) notes the potential benefits of studying both Maya and Mycenaean society.

4 Recent discussions include chapters in Shelmerdine (2008); Dickinson (2006a); Wallace (2000) and (2003); Rehak and Younger...
Plan of the book
In order to set in context the discussion of collapse and of Postpalatial society, Chapter 1 attempts a brief introduction to Mycenaean material culture and interpretations of Mycenaean society. There are different interpretations made by scholars, which in turn affect any understanding of collapse. A limited survey is also offered, in order to clarify the extent and chronology of the collapse. Chapter 2 reviews developments in general collapse theory as drawn from recent and major publications. It further examines recent discussion of specific examples of collapse to identify current trends in interpretation. Chapter 3 critically examines theories of the Mycenaean collapse, concentrating on major styles of interpretation and ending in a discussion of the present consensus. Chapter 4 uses recent discussions of the Hittite, Maya and Roman collapses and continuities to suggest possible analogies for processes at work in LBA Greece. Chapter 5 examines the evidence for migrations and population mobility in Postpalatial Greece, discussing settlements and sites, and noting the contribution of survey. Chapter 6 deals with changes in rulership and social structure in the Postpalatial period, emphasising distinctions between areas of Greece that had palaces and non-palatial regions. The conclusion attempts to draw together the preceding discussions.

1. Mycenaean Greece and the collapse

Introduction

This chapter has two aims. The first is to offer some context to the subsequent discussion of collapse theory and aspects of continuity and change that form the bulk of this study. This is both necessary and desirable, since notions of how and why collapses occur often proceed from interpretations of how societies operate. In order to do this a tentative description of Mycenaean Greece in the palatial period (c.1400-1200BC) will be offered. However, it would be misleading to suggest that scholars agree on all aspects of what exactly Mycenaean Greece was, and how it worked, and any interpretation is likely to create an illusion of unity or stability – a snapshot, rather than a sophisticated, layered and diachronic understanding (see Wright 2008). In fact, there remain many significant areas of disagreement, ranging from the degree of centralisation and power of the ‘palaces’, the nature and extent of international trade and diplomacy, to whether the population at large, or just the rulers, were ‘Greek’. These issues, where relevant, will also be dealt with in connection with particular collapse theories themselves (chapter 3). Initially then, some brief defining points based on Mycenaean material culture will be discussed, followed by some comments on palaces, hinterlands and non-palatial regions and their interrelations. This will allow a better assessment of collapse theories and a better understanding of the collapse itself.

The second aim of this chapter is to review the evidence for destructions and abandonments and their chronology and synchronicity, as well as to consider some of the problems of demography, which constitute problems in understanding the period. Destructions occurred sporadically in various phases, but it is the destructions and abandonments around the end of LHIIIB2, c.1200BC, which are identified as the physical indication of the collapse, marking the end of palatial society in Greece. Many of the issues raised here will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Mycenaean culture

The Mycenaean cultural region is usually agreed to be more or less that of classical Greece, especially the southern and central mainland (Figure 5.1; Shelmerdine 2001a, 330 and Fig. 1; Mountjoy 1999, 13; Dickinson 2006a, 24-25 and Fig. 2.1), although this also reflects modern political issues and the history of research in the area. However, defining Mycenaean material culture is no easy matter since ‘there is not a single feature that could be considered typical of Mycenaean material culture that is equally prevalent in every part of the Mycenaean region, except the decorated pottery, and even this has a much wider range in some regions than others’ (Dickinson 2006b, 115; Mountjoy 1999, 15). Aside from the pottery, another common identifier is the widespread use of chamber tombs and large tholoi ‘for ruling families’, although again there were regional differences in mortuary practices (Mountjoy 1999, 822). Nevertheless, a Mycenaean heartland is usually identified, centred in the Argolid and Mycenae itself and including the surrounding major centres. To the north, Boeotia, Attica, and coastal Thessaly, to the south Laconia, and to the south-west Messenia are also considered Mycenaean. Some areas once considered as perhaps not entirely Mycenaean, such as Phocis and Locris, produced their own decorated and plain Mycenaean pottery and had chamber-tomb cemeteries; they also used sealstones, and so should be considered Mycenaean (Dickinson 2006a, 24-25; Mountjoy 1999, 739-747). Achaea too is now recognised as Mycenaean in terms of tomb use and pottery types throughout the Late Helladic period (Papadopoulos 1979; Eder 2006). Other areas, such as inland Thessaly and Aitolo-Akarnania may have been more mixed in their habits of material culture (Dickinson 2006a, 25). In Aitolo-Akarnania there was more imported Mycenaean pottery although many types were not present and many sites had no Mycenaean pottery (Mountjoy 1999, 798). In Thessaly there seems to be a more Mycenaean area in the south-eastern coastal area and south-eastern plain, where chamber-tombs and large tholoi are found, and these areas seem to have had the most contact with southern Greece (Mountjoy 1999, 822). Even so, it is perhaps not necessary to look for too much uniformity and standardisation, and it is evident that contacts were present throughout the Greek peninsula and beyond. Cavanagh and Mee (1998, 77) note that although tholoi and chamber tombs become common in LHIIIIA-B, ‘pit and cist graves were still common’ and ‘if we examine regional preferences, we find that there is no consistency. The impression of uniformity is in fact a mirage.’

Terminology may imply a homogenous population of ‘Mycenaeans’ across Greece, but this is not necessarily the case (Davis and Bennet 1999, 113), and the material culture itself does not tell us about the ethnicity of its users. As Dickinson (in Barber 1999, 139) has pointed out, ‘Mycenaeans are not a people. They are just what we call a culture.’ The spread of Mycenaean culture, pottery style and burial forms does not require any unusual displacement or change of population outside of normal movement and exchange, and certainly, like its absence in some areas, need not indicate anything about language or ethnicity. While an early form of Greek was the written language of the Linear B tablets, it may not have been the only language spoken even at the sites where it was used. In the linguistically diverse Maya cultural zone, Southern Classic Maya became a prestige language used widely by scribes at many sites, even where it was not spoken (Coe 1999, 38). Thus, even these apparent similarities may mask potential diversity. While it is perfectly plausible that most people spoke a Greek language or dialect related to that of Linear B, it is ‘perfectly possible that Greek only became virtually the exclusive language of the southern Aegean in the course...
of the Postpalatial Period and EIA, not only in Crete but elsewhere (as must also have happened in the Greek-speaking parts of Cyprus) (Dickinson 2006a, 53).

**Palaces, territories and non-palatial areas**

A general division between palatial and non-palatial areas of Mycenaean Greece is commonly made, although this binary opposition is likely to be an oversimplification of what may have been a more complex situation and set of relationships between sites of differing power, reach and influence. While efforts have been made to create a political geography of Mycenaean Greece (e.g. Cherry and Page, in Renfrew and Bahn 1996, 196; Galaty and Parkinson 1999, 5 Figure 1.1), often inspired by the Homeric Catalogue of Ships, a category of evidence inadmissible in such a context (Dickinson 1999b), or inferred from the archaeology, it is unclear whether any clear or meaningful political boundaries could be reconstructed for Mycenaean Greece as a whole; to do so would also ignore the likelihood of a dynamic situation. Part of the problem lies in the understanding and definition of what palaces were, their relationships with both local and more distant territories, and with other major and minor centres, as well as the relative status and organisation of different parts of Greece. Since this work makes use of the distinction between palatial and non-palatial areas as being of importance in understanding the changes around 1200 and after, the subject warrants discussion here.

A first point should be made about the term ‘palace’. This has become the standard way of referring to the particular structures discussed below, generally agreed to be the most significant central places of particular regions and communities in terms of their social and political prominence (Galaty and Parkinson 1999, 5; Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008; Wright 2008). At least some of them seem clearly to have been the seats of kingy figures, although central places in different regions undoubtedly differed in scale and importance, as well as in layout and design; between ‘central places’ there may also have been differences in the style of rulership or governance. To some degree, the term palace may be an unfortunate one, since even the most impressive sites are small, especially as seen in comparison to Cretan palaces and palace complexes of the Near East. It is at least clear that palaces had a variety of functions, including being a royal residence, administrative centre, and focal point for ritual and feasting, as well as centres for craft production and storage and a flow of goods in and out. One particular difficulty is in deciding whether smaller centres likely to have been important in their own region, and which shared some of the functions of palaces, should be termed palaces; this is a problem which to some degree is created by the terminology, and it is unclear where or if any boundary should be drawn. As will become clear, some sites are more easily defined as palaces, whereas others may be better termed local centres, although this differentiation should be considered as primarily one of scale and complexity – both may have been utilised by rulers.

Palaces can be defined by several criteria, but perhaps the most useful is the presence of a literate bureaucracy using Linear B, which certainly means Mycenae and Tiryns in the Argolid, Thebes in Boeotia, and Pylos in Messenia. As can be seen, there were relatively few of these major palace centres. However, inscribed sealings have also been found at Midea, indicating that it was an administrative centre of some kind, while uninscribed examples have come from the Menelaion, uniquely of a non-Linear B using centre (Dickinson pers. comm.). Pottery painted with Linear B signs has been found at Mycenae, Tiryns, Midea, possibly the Menelaion, Eleusis, Thebes, Orchomenos, and Gla, but where this is imported it need not imply literacy at the site (Shelmerdine 2001, 357).

At least some of the major palaces, clearly Tiryns, Pylos and Mycenae, seem to have contained megaron units, which formed their architectural and ideological focus (Shelmerdine 2001a, 350; Kilian 1988b; Wright 2006, 25). These units tended to be large, and could be ashlars-façade; they were divided into a porch, vestibule and throne room with a large circular hearth in the centre, surrounded by four columns; at Pylos and Tiryns a throne was present in the middle of the right-hand wall, which in Mycenae no longer exists due to the collapse of part of the building; they had plastered, sometimes decorated floors; access was restricted to a doorway from the vestibule; there were two columns in the porches and the walls were decorated with frescoes (Rutter 2000a). Of those sites, the architectural arrangements of the citadel and palace complex at Tiryns, and in particular the labyrinthine route into the heart of the upper citadel where the megaron lay, may be the most impressive in terms of visual impact and complexity. Pylos appears somewhat small in comparison, although size is not necessarily a good indicator of power, and the city, and/or palace complex, may have appeared more impressive than the remains suggest, at least in comparison to other sites in the region.

At Thebes, where the modern city makes systematic excavation very difficult, the House of Kadmos was a major building, thought to be part of the palace; as well, workshops and rooms containing Linear B indicate that a palace existed, but ceremonial rooms and the hypothetical megaron are not known, and the palace may have differed architecturally from the megaron type (Dakouri-Hild 2001, 105). Thebes may have had circuit walls of a non-cyclopean kind (Shelmerdine 2001, 350 and n.128; Iakovides 1999a, 199), and it seems that Pylos may have had a circuit wall and monumental gateway, but the linear feature identified is of uncertain date (Shelmerdine 2001a, 378). The citadels of Mycenae, Tiryns, Midea and

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5 A welcome new expanded edition of Galaty and Parkinson (1999) was published in 2007 and should be consulted in reference to many of the issues raised in this chapter. Unfortunately it was not possible to discuss it here.
Gla also made extensive use of impressive cyclopean building techniques in fortifications, and a network of roads and bridges has been identified around Mycenae (Loader 1998, 27). Athens had notable cyclopean style fortifications, but the Acropolis was so extensively reused that the existence of a palace there is not certain. Teikhos Dymaion and Krisa were also well fortified, although they have nothing resembling a megaron or palace complex, but fortifications are absent from the Menelaion, Dimini and Orchomenos (Dickinson 2006a, 25). Wright (2008) has recently emphasised the variety apparent in the architectural evidence. It seems that impressive fortifications and building styles were not restricted to palaces, but equally that not all sites, even ones recognised as of importance, appear to have had such features. At all sites palaces or otherwise where significant building took place, the ability to mobilise and organise labour, as well as design and plan sometimes complex or large-scale projects, is indicated.

Orchomenos is a more difficult site to interpret, for while there is an impressive tholos tomb and the remains of fresco decoration, no megaron or palace complex is known, and no Linear B tablets have been found (Dickinson 1994, 78, 91). It is often suggested that the power at Orchomenos was of similar status to rival palatial Thebes, and that it undertook the large and complex project of draining the Copais Basin to create new farmland, having the fortress of Gla constructed there to dominate the area and store the produce grown. At Gla, while there are significant architectural remains, there is no classic megaron unit, although it is also sometimes thought to have been a palatial site in its own right (Shelmerdine 2001a, 340). This citadel housed a number of impressive structures including a pillared hall and an ‘L’ shaped residential building with a megaron-like structure at the north-west corner (Iakovides 1983, 91-107). Unique examples of stucco work on the walls of many rooms sometimes includes relief decoration, and stucco fluted half-columns were also found attached to a wall in the east wing (Iakovides 1983, 101). All this, as well as the impressive walls, would seem to suggest a high status site.

Iakovides (1983, 107) thought this so-called ‘mansion’ to be a rather impersonal barracks or communal residence, a specialised administrative headquarters, rather than a royal palace and the capital of a province. Linear B tablets, which could throw light on the relationship between Orchomenos and Gla, have not been found at either site, and were not certainly in use at either. This problem recalls the difficulty in defining palaces by too strict criteria, for it suggests that non-literate centres could nevertheless be powerful, even royal centres in their own right. It is possible that at some sites such as Orchomenos Linear B may well have been used, but just not found. In this regard it should be noted that non-textual archaeological evidence alone is not enough to identify a palatial territory. Without Linear B the integrated territory of Messenia or the links between the parts of Boeotia and Euboea linked to Thebes would remain unseen, and non-palatial and palatial territories do not look different in themselves. Based on present evidence it is impossible to conclude definitively whether Gla was an independent centre or, as is more often thought, was attached and subordinate to Orchomenos.

At Dimini in Thessaly, a building complex with two megarons, A and B, has recently been identified as a palace or administrative centre (see figure 6.11; Adrimi-Sismani 2006). Megaron A seems to have had a central hearth, and to have been fronted by a courtyard, and was flanked by storerooms and workshops, while Megaron B is somewhat different and appears to be associated with a shrine and altar. While the megarons seem comparable to those at major sites, particularly Megaron A, it seems there were no throne emplacements, and the ‘palace’ complex seems integrated into the town rather than separated from it as at Mycenae and Tiryns. Furthermore, the site has not revealed any Linear B tablets, although instances of Linear B have apparently been found on site and in the area, which hint at the existence of some literate population. One unusual example incised on a kylix sherd from Megaron B, and on a stone object, thought to be a weight, from Megaron A (Adrimi-Sismani 2006, 468, 474). A possible Linear B ‘inscription’, which would be unique, has been found on the lintel of a tholos tomb in the region, north of Volos at Kazanaki (AR 2005, 59-60). It seems fair to conclude that the site was certainly of some importance and that there was a palace of some kind, which was presumably interacting with the other palaces and major sites to the south. But on the current evidence at least, it may not have had a literate bureaucracy, although what may be the usual use of Linear B inscribed on a kylix is interesting. It should be borne in mind though, that it need not have been a local who made the markings.

At Kanakia, on Salamis, an important 13th century complex has been identified, but no Linear B has been found (AR 2001, 14-15; AR 2002, 15; AR 2005, 10). Although it has inevitably been hailed by some as ‘the palace of Ajax’, the complex is somewhat irregular, and while there were many rooms indicating storage and production, and even megarons apparently like those at Midea have been identified, it is difficult to conclude that this was a true palace with a literate bureaucracy rather than an important local centre; there is no evidence of special architecture or decoration that might make the buildings more noteworthy. The site was not insignificant though, with links overseas, and was perhaps as important as the Menelaion (Dickinson pers.comm.).

The Linear B texts allow some insight into the way that palaces bound territories and different locations together. The Pylos tablets, which mention some 4000-5000 people, and name c.240 sites in two provinces and 16 districts in the south-western Peloponnese, demonstrate that the palace had real reach into the surrounding regions, in terms of both information and the movement
of goods (Palaima 2004a, 269). This seems to apply to Thebes as well (Palaima 2004a, 270). Texts from Pylos and Thebes show that animals could be sent to the centre from outlying territories for feasting on a large scale (perhaps 1000 or more people, on occasion), while centres sent offerings to outlying shrines (Palaima 2004b). Some animals were transported over 50km to Thebes, and across the Euboean Gulf from Karystos and Amarynthos on Euboea, while Amarynthos received wool from Thebes (Palaima 2004b, 226). This testifies to a degree of integration that denotes significant interrelationships across sometimes large distances. Thus Pylos evidently had a defined sphere of interest in Messenia, and Thebes had interests in southern Euboea and Boeotia, and perhaps even Aegina (Aravantinos 1995, 616-617; Shelmerdine 2001a, 345 n. 94, 356; Hope Simpson 2003, 234). The interrelations of the sites in the Argolid, where fewer Linear B tablets have been found, are not well understood, although Mycenae is usually accorded primacy. The situation may have been complex and have changed over time.

While the texts allow a limited picture of the potential network of complex relationships that existed within Mycenaean palace societies, this kind of society was not present in all areas of mainland Greece, as noted above. The situation may have been complex and have changed over time. The texts allow a limited picture of the potential network of complex relationships that existed within Mycenaean palace societies, this kind of society was not present in all areas of mainland Greece, as noted above (Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008). In some areas, literate palace societies did not develop, even though significant local centres existed, as at the Menelaion, Dimini, Krissa, Teikhos Dymaion and Kanakia. It could be suggested that, if it were not for the discovery of texts at the major palace sites, it would be difficult or even impossible to deduce the existence of palace societies from the archaeology alone, and therefore to label some areas non-palatial is begging the question. The problems with Orchomenos and Gla were noted above. However, areas like Elis or Achaea also reveal no significant or comparable sites: Teikhos Dymaion is not particularly big and seems to have had no lower town. The fortification of Krissa was evidently organised by a power of some kind but there is no palace or similar building, and there is no other identified power-base nearby. Indeed, it seems flawed logic to assume that all areas of Greece should have developed, or been developing towards a palace society since it is evident that societies of greater and lesser complexity, and with different organisational styles, could exist alongside each other contemporaneously, as in LBA Anatolia, and Archaic and Classical Greece.

Given that there was in all likelihood a mixture of differently organised societies in LBA Greece, all of which could be called Mycenaean, through their use of Mycenaean material culture, it is necessary to consider how they related with one another. The Linear B texts reveal very little about the interrelations of the palaces themselves (Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008, 306-307). Shelmerdine (2001, 356) notes the possible significance of the term reconstructed as Lakedaimontos huios (‘son of Lakdaimon’), and three examples of the ethnic term lakdaimonios, on tablets from Thebes. While interesting, concluding anything about interregional relationships from this limited evidence is problematic, due to the assumption that it relates to the area of Greece later known as Lakdaimon. It is perfectly plausible that dynastic marriages, hostage taking, and so on, played a role in articulating relationships and relative status, while guest friendship rituals are possibly hinted at by some Linear B texts which refer to perfumed oil and textiles as xenwia (Shelmerdine 2001, 354). It is likely though that, as in other areas such as the Near East, systems of alliance, dependence, and rivalry existed between sites and centres of differing significance (Wright 2008). These can be envisaged as existing (horizontally) between the palace centres themselves, and (vertically) between palace centres and other sites; it should be remembered that those individuals at the centre of palace societies were probably engaged in an ‘international’ society that stretched across Greece and perhaps further (see below), but also that they will have had concern for their local situation. ‘Politics’ will therefore have meant maintaining a balance in various spheres of activity. Furthermore, important figures and communities in non-palatial areas could equally have played a part in this world.

Regarding the relationship of palatial and non-palatial areas on the mainland, Eder has recently argued (2007, 4) that patterns of seal distribution illustrate widespread regional communications throughout Greece, which is surely correct. She has further argued that in fact ‘groups of seals link the regions of northern, central and western Greece on various levels more or less directly to the palatial centres’ and that these non-palatial regions were in fact ‘controlled and exploited by the Mycenaean palaces’ (Eder 2007, 5,10). However, based on this evidence alone, such a conclusion seems far from certain; Eder is perhaps overemphasising the power of the centres, their role in controlling trade, and the dependency of peripheral zones on centres for manufactured goods (Eder 2007, 2). Links between such areas could equally be seen as mutually beneficial and negotiated, rather than always exploitative and negative, or imposed by the palaces, and the notion of ‘control’ is a problematic one.

The development and organisation of Mycenaean palace societies
Having broached some of the difficulties in defining and identifying palaces, their territories and non-palatial areas above, it remains to say something more about the development and organisation of the palace societies (see most recently Wright 2008, 242-252; Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008). It is likely that the process of their expansion, development and maintenance, and the relationships involved, were of importance in their collapse, as is discussed further in chapters 3 and 4 in particular. It should be stated initially that, despite a recent comment by Postgate (in Voutsaki and Killen 2001, 160) that, from the perspective of a Near Eastern
Palace societies emerged in some parts of Greece by LHIIIA and continued to exist throughout LHIIIB (c.1400-1200). These had developed from smaller and less complex societies, often characterised as chieftdoms, and thus a distinction between earlier chieftdom type societies and later state-like societies is often suggested (Wright 2008; Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008; Shelmerdine 2001a, 349; Small 1999). Bennet (1995 and 1999) has proposed an outline of the expansion of one palace site, Pylos, in its immediate area and through Messenia, as it came to dominate an area of approximately 2000km², incorporating and outstripping its local rivals. The extension of control over the site Nichoria, a local centre in its own right some distance away, may be indicated by the abandonment of the LHIIIA1 megaron (Unit IV-4a), which went out of use in LHIIIA2, the abandonment of a long used tholos tomb, also in LHIIIA2, and the construction of a new one (Bennet 1995, 598-599). Similar patterns of development could be expected for other palace centres.

The creation of larger palace-based polities in some areas would have involved some reordering of society, perhaps often at the level of local elites or influential figures, and witnessed the creation of a paramount figure, the wanax, at its centre. Undoubtedly, as regions and wider areas came under the influence of emergent centres, local communities would have been forced to accommodate them in some way, and this would have stimulated changes both at the centre and periphery. It is likely that a variety of strategies were used in the expansions of local centres into more regionally influential sites (and presumably between major sites in different regions) including diplomacy, negotiation and alliance, though warfare may also have played a significant role (Acheson 1999, 100-102), as it did in other societies.

Since this process affected many individual communities across different parts of Greece, it is impossible to generalise about the way in which it was undertaken, but it need not be assumed always to have been a negative relationship from the point of view of smaller or peripheral sites. Even regarding Roman imperialism, it should be remembered that pre-existing local power structures often continued into the empire, albeit with the addition of a new upper tier, and that much of the central governance was reactive rather than proactive. Thomas’s comment that ‘self-government continued at the king’s command’ seems appropriate, especially given the trend in recent interpretations of the significance of Linear B, discussed below (Thomas 1995, 349). Indeed smaller sites could have sought out links with more powerful centres for many reasons, including gaining advantage over rivals. In any case, since the palatial regions were bound together by a variety of social ties, stemming from a range of relationships, it would be expected that these relationships could play a role in their collapse (Wright 2001).

There is some debate about how palace societies were organised in terms of their place in the social, political and economic landscape of LBA Greece. Positions differ from a minimal view of the influence of palaces and their integration of territories, with palaces characterised as rather superficial phenomena, ‘clumsily grafted’ onto a warrior society, which did not control territories but rather focused on controlling trade routes (Sherratt 2001, 238; Small 1999; see also Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008), to views usually derived from interpretations of Linear B tablets which suggest that they were almost totalitarian regimes (Deger-Jalkotzy 1996, 724-725 and 1998 a and b; Betancourt 1976 and 2000). The minimalist picture, while rightly grounding interpretations of the scale LBA societies in Greece in an archaeological reality untainted by the influence of the Homeric epics, surely underestimates the impact of the palaces, with their 200 year history, and development of networks and relationships in their regions. The evident reach of the centre into other communities shown by the Linear B tablets, albeit primarily from Pylos but more recently also from Thebes, equally should not be over interpreted, but nevertheless, interest in trade routes would surely be followed by at least a degree of interest in territories. Some variation between the organisational style of palace centres is also apparent (Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008, 292, 303-306).

On the other hand, interpretations of Linear B and its significance have matured since the early days of its study. It is quite clear that the palaces’ interests, as recoverable from the tablets, were specific and selective and that most economic activity went on outside their bureaucratic interest (Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008, 306-308; Halstead 1992, 1999a and 1999b). Although some commodities flowed in to the palaces, they do not seem concerned with their production and collection (Halstead 1999b, 36), even with regard to pottery production (Whitelaw 2001) and there may have been no general taxation, although evidence is limited (Dickinson 2006a, 41). They also do not seem to have acted ‘as a central clearing house for all goods and commodities manufactured’ in their territories, as has sometimes been thought (Dickinson 2006a, 37).

Although palaces undoubtedly will have acted as economic stimuli, and their very presence may have stimulated population growth and increased more complex kinds of social interaction, their direct influence may have been felt ‘by most inhabitants of the territory only intermittently and indirectly’ and need not be seen as
unduly exploitative or harsh (Palaima 2004a, 269-270; Dickinson 2006a, 38). Areas closer to the palace may have naturally been more easily influenced and better integrated into palace systems, but there may have been no really significant integration or overt control of outlying areas with which palaces were sometimes certainly connected. Such styles of dominance are recognisable in other cultures, such as the Maya, where the expansion of some centres into ‘galactic polities,’ i.e. major centres that won allegiance and tribute from other centres, did not involve direct rulership from the paramount centre (Demarest 2004, 215-217).

Linear B does reveal something about the social hierarchy that existed in at least some palace societies (Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008, 292-295). The wanax appears as the most prominent figure. He had the largest landholding, unique ‘appointment authority’ and was involved in religious, economic and military affairs (Palaima 2006, 64-68). A figure called the lawagetan, often interpreted as ‘leader of the people’, seems to have been second to the wanax to judge from land holdings, although the identity, role and relationship of this person to the wanax is unclear (Bennet 2006, 192). Sometimes the lawagetan is thought to have been a military leader, and is sometimes speculatively linked with ‘secondary’ megarons at palace sites. The ejeta (‘followers’) also appear to have been related with the military sphere and could have been members of an aristocracy, the companions of the king. There seems also to be some distinction between members of the palace based hierarchy and those whose authority may be locally based, as has been suggested for the qasireu (Palaima 2006, 68). However, since Linear B tablets only reveal the selective interests of the palaces, any suppositions about less well-known figures are questionable, and it may be that they reveal little or nothing about local elites or prominent families or individuals that existed, as opposed to the roles of people in the specific context of the palace. That such individuals and groups did not exist is highly implausible.

Wright (2006, 37) summarises the undoubted importance of palaces in their communities as the ‘focus of political, economic, social, ideological, historic and myth-historic practices and beliefs… a cultural cloak that the ruling elite wrap around themselves and in which they symbolically envelop their retinue, clients and commoners.’ This was achieved through the active use of palaces as places of participation, and perhaps of exclusion, that would create and reinforce relationships between elites (Palaima 2004b).

Palaces, then, did not control all aspects of life in the regions where they existed, but they can be expected to have had a significant impact in terms of affecting the material and non-material culture of the regions of which they were a part. It seems that over time, particularly powerful individuals and groups in different regions saw it as valid and useful to compete and engage with each other in the construction of particular architectural forms (the palaces), and in the use of particular forms of culture (e.g. Linear B), which represented a particular lifestyle, and this in itself shows the significance of the palaces as an expression of social behaviour. Nevertheless, whilst the Linear B tablets, palaces, citadels and associated burials at some sites are the most visibly impressive remains of palatial society, most of Greece may not have been organised along the same lines as palace societies.

Non-palatial societies
Many areas of the Mycenaean world did not become palace states in LHIII-A-B, rather ‘less organised principalities, close in nature to their early Mycenaean predecessors, may have been normal in many regions’ (Dickinson 1994, 78). Even sites such as the Menelaion and Kanakia may better fit this category. These areas of non-state formation must be considered as important as palatial regions in gaining a holistic and more accurate view of the diverse Mycenaean world. In the north, west and central Peloponnese, for example, the areas of Achaea, Elis and Arcadia, as well as areas north of the Gulf of Corinth, there is no evidence of anything approaching a palatial building complex, although Teikhos Dymaion and Krisa were discussed above. This has led to these areas being termed peripheral to the core of the palatial zones (Eder 2007, 1-2), and while this is a valid archaeological distinction, it does not mean that the population of these areas can be forgotten or sidelined in favour of palatial areas.

Vermeule (1960a, 1) wrote that ‘the Greek mainland is also dotted with less significant towns and villages whose role was not so direct and grand in the formation of policy or style, but whose remains can in some ways be more precisely suggestive for ordinary Mycenaean patterns of existence and for the course of history as it affected the common population.’ Indeed, these regions and many of the Aegean islands (Cyclades, Dodecanese), which were also Mycenaean (Deger-Jalkotzy 1998b, 105), should not be considered inferior to the major sites, which archaeologists have not surprisingly focussed on. The variability of socio-political evolution is itself a factor to be taken into account when considering any period of LBA Greece. Even within one culture zone, in this case the Mycenaean, it is not unusual to expect a variety of structures to coexist at different levels of complexity.

The northern Peloponnesian region of Achaea, for example, was long considered an underpopulated backwater of Mycenaean culture (e.g. Vermeule 1960a). For some time, few sites were known, but continued work increased their number to 70 in 1979, and pushed the chronological range back to the formative LHII, although later sites predominate (Papadopoulos 1979). It is now thought to have been densely populated in Mycenaean times, with scattered settlements and

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6 Two works that could not be consulted but may be of relevance are Kramer-Hajos (2008) and Tartaron (in press).
associated cemeteries (Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, 199). While burials provide most of the evidence, as they do for pre-state periods in palatial areas, there are notable settlement sites at Teikhos Dymaion and Aigeira, although these have their floruit in the postpalatial period (SCIEM 2000). Achaea possesses early Mycenaean tholos tombs at Kallithea and Klaus, perhaps for local rulers, as well as many warrior burials from LHIIIC at Kallithea, Klaus, Lousika and two at Krini. A tomb at Krini was in use from LHIIIA to mid-LHIIIC, with late warrior burials, which suggests a continuity of stratified burials (Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, 199).

The western regions of the Peloponnese, Achaea and the Ionian Islands in particular, as well as the Aegean islands, have often been fitted into a traditional culture-historical narrative that links their late Mycenaeanisation with supposed refugees fleeing from destroyed palatial states, and sometimes these narratives are linked with myths and bigger population movements (Vermeule 1960a, 18-19; Barber 1999, 137). However, it could more plausibly be suggested that these regions existed in pre-state conditions alongside palatial states and underwent their own continued developments and transformations.

The evolution of socio-political complexity does not necessarily lead from chieftdom to statehood in all cases, or at the same time, and proximity to states or more complex societies does not in itself necessarily stimulate similar developments in all areas. Wright (1990, 48) has suggested that the formation of palace centred society on the mainland ‘was much delayed with respect to the initial period of stratification observed during the Shaft Grave period.’ This is an equally valid perspective concerning developments on the mainland and in the Aegean itself. Rather than simplistically associating changes in Achaea or the Aegean islands with palatial collapse elsewhere, i.e. through the supposed influx of refugees, they can be considered in light of the local regional development of complexity. That said, the spur to increased complexity in Achaea and the north-western Peloponnese, as well as the Ionian and Aegean islands may have been associated with changing patterns of trade, which themselves may have had something to do with palatial collapse (Sherratt 2001), and this is discussed in more detail in chapter 3. Non-palatial Achaea enjoyed a period of prosperity during LHIIIC in stark contrast to postpalatial Messenia, suggesting divergent and asynchronous trajectories of development that could have had a variety of complex reasons (Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, 200; Eder 2006, 559).

A total landscape
It may be best to consider Mycenaean Greece as patterned by spheres of influence dominated either by larger or smaller political units of greater or lesser complexity and reach, interacting and competing in different ways, rather than by fixed territorial entities with permanently defined boundaries. The strength and influence of palaces in particular regions may have waxed and waned, depending on the interrelations between central and local elites, the strength of individual rulers, and other factors, at any given time. Such fluctuations may to some degree be represented by at least some of the destructions visible in the archaeological record (see below). This is true both of the palaces own immediate region and more distant areas that may appear non-palatial. There are likely to have been many traditional relationships that developed over time, perhaps even between distant areas, that Linear B does not mention, but which may underpin those that scholars are aware of, while new relationships would have been negotiated continuously as circumstances dictated (Palaima 2004a, 300-301).

Clearly, significant local sites, while smaller and less visibly complex, should be considered in a similar way, although they are even more difficult to discuss than palatial areas. Non-palatial areas and sites should not be considered as of secondary importance, but as peoples by equally active agents who played a role in the life of LBA Greece, and will in some areas at least have interacted with palace people. We cannot be certain what forms these relations had, but again, a variety of situations and relationships should be envisaged.

It is extremely difficult to arrive at anything approaching a complete understanding of the Mycenaean societies operating in the later thirteenth century, but some sensitivity to variation in a total landscape is necessary. In this view, it still seems appropriate to make a broad definition between palatial and non-palatial areas and not to assume that all societies, even those that on the surface make look similar, operated in the same way,

The Ahhiyawa question
Another problem connected with the status and activities of mainland palaces, the Aegean islands and parts of coastal Anatolia, which must be mentioned here, is that of Ahhiyawa. Since 1924, it has been suggested, on the basis of the similarity with the Homeric use of the terms ‘Achaean’ for Greeks, that a kingdom called Ahhiya/Ahhiyawa, with its own Great King, mentioned in Hittite letters, refers to a Mycenaean Greek kingdom (Bryce 1998, 59-60). Although this remains controversial, it seems to have become cautiously accepted, in part due to the increasing evidence for the presence of Mycenaean culture in western Anatolia, the region of contact between the Hittites and Ahhiyawa (Mee 1998, 142-143; Mountjoy 1998; Niemeier 1998 and 1999; Hope Simpson 2003). As Bryce notes (1998, 61), ‘if the Ahhiyawa-Mycenaean equation is not valid, then we must accept that there were two discrete Late Bronze Age civilizations with remarkably similar names, making their presence felt in the same region and in the same period… it is difficult to write this off as coincidence’.

The location of Ahhiyawa is significant for understanding the potential reach of palaces, and palatial relations with non-palatial regions, specifically the Aegean islands,
since according to the Hittite texts ‘islands’, arguably the Dodecanese, and Millawanda, identified as Miletus, were at times under the influence or rule of the kings of Ahhiyawa from c.1300 (Niemeier 1998; Bryce 1998, 210; Hope Simpson 2003, 217, 223, 228-231). The many competing theories have been outlined in detail by Niemeier (1998; Figure 1.1).

Mountjoy (1998, 33-45) has recently supported the idea that Ahhiyawa was a kingdom based on Rhodes, and including most of the Dodecanese and parts of mainland Anatolia. However, as yet, there is no evidence of a significant centre on Rhodes or Kos, which constitutes for many an argument against this identification; Hope Simpson (2003, 231) also doubts that they would have ‘constituted a sufficient power base for a Great King of Ahhiyawa’.

As for the mainland, Thebes has been considered a possible location, which could now be considered more likely, since it evidently had interests beyond its own immediate territory (Hope Simpson 2003, 234). Hope
Simpson (2003, 236), however, doubts that Thebes should be ranked a ‘Great Power’ since it had a nearby rival at Orchomenos, although this ignores the possibility that Theban interests lay primarily overseas and to the south-east, rather than in expanding its home territory at the expense of its neighbour. Pylos is not usually considered as an option, although its small size and location in western Messenia should not immediately dismiss it. The existence of naval forces, indicated by references to rowers on the Linear B tablets, and the presence of people from south-western Anatolia must be taken seriously as evidence of a definite connection between Pylos and the eastern Aegean, the precise mechanisms of which remain unclear (Niemeier 1998, 40).

The most preferred option, however, remains Mycenae, since with its evident wealth and cultural prominence it may be considered a special case (Hope Simpson 2003, 233-234; French 2005). Although the nature of the relations of the sites within the Argolid is unclear, it may be that Mycenae was the dominant site in a network of interconnected polities, and it has been suggested that these reached out across the Aegean to influence the Dodecanese and south-western Anatolia (Hope Simpson 2003, 229). On Rhodes, the high proportions of pottery coming from the Argolid in LHIIIA2/B may reflect this, although Argive pottery need not equate with Argive political control, nor imply any mass migration from one region to the other (Georgiadis 2004, 64).

Voutsaki has argued for a special relationship, perhaps even in a political or military sense, between the Argolid and Rhodes (2001, 210-211; Sherratt 2001, 222 n.17). Again it is important to consider the nature of control. Sherratt (2001, 222-223 n.17) doubts that tight control could have been exercised at such a distance and suggests a more reciprocal relationship, and this seems more likely. Hope Simpson (2003, 230) also rightly notes ‘the problems involved in managing, and even in maintaining, this and any other extended kingdom.’ Such problems are demonstrated in Hittite letters relating to Ahhiyawa, which suggest that members of the king’s family played a role in ‘ruling’ these distant places, although with a necessary and perhaps high degree of autonomy, which Miletus also had (Bryce 1998, 61, 322; Gurney 1990, 40-41).

**Destructions and abandonments**

This section will give a brief survey of the evidence for destructions and abandonments from LHIIIA1 onwards, after a brief discussion of some chronological and terminological issues. Destructions occurred at many sites both major and minor throughout the palatial and postpalatial period and are often taken as evidence of warfare, although accidents and deliberate destruction for replanning are other explanations (Dickinson 2006a, 42). Due to the problems of arriving at an accurate absolute chronology, it is difficult or impossible to give precise dates for these events, and this outline will follow the relative chronology offered by ceramic classification. However, sometimes is difficult to be certain which particular destruction or phase a source is referring to, owing to sometimes vague language and the different terminology or phasing between sites, and the different lengths given to phases (for a discussion, see Mountjoy 1999, 38-41, Table II). In the later phases of LHIIIIC there are fewer known settlements, and thus habitation patterns are less clear, but by this time many of the LHIIBB settlements had been abandoned; whatever settlements there were must have been smaller and main sites certainly less impressive, with some population groups gathered at certain centres, and others perhaps spread thinly across the land (see chapter 5 ‘The contribution of survey’, for further discussion).

Although the destructions associated with the collapse of Mycenaean palace society are traditionally those which occurred at or near the end of LHIIBB ceramic phase, usually placed ‘at or near the end of the 13th century BC’ (Rutter in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 255), or c.1190/1180 (Mountjoy 1993, 4 Table I; 1999 16-18 and Table I; Shelmerdine 2001a, Table 1), Mountjoy (1997, 110; 1999, 36-36, 75, 152-153) has identified a transitional LHIIB2/LHIIIIC Early phase in pottery at many sites including, Iria, Tiryns, Korakou, Athens, Thorikos, Ayios Kosmas, Eutresis, Thebes, the Menelaion, Pylos, Nichoria and Midea. Wiener (in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 246) has followed this, suggesting that LHIIBB production in the Argolid largely ended around 1215 followed by ‘about a decade for IIIB-IIIC Transitional’ and he suggests that ‘the destructions of the Mycenaean palaces when IIIB-IIIC Transitional pottery is in use may occur at an earlier date than is generally supposed.’

Demakopoulou (2003, 91) has resisted this classification of destruction deposits at Midea and prefers late LHIIBB. In fact, she sees no evidence for a stratigraphic LHIIBB-LHIIIIC Transitional phase at any site and she cautions against creating new phases based purely on pottery developments rather than stratigraphy. Mountjoy’s transitional pottery appears in both destruction and post-destruction deposits at Mycenae and possibly Tiryns (Dickinson 2006a, 44). Although Wiener has taken the Transitional phase to equate to a chronological phase, Demakopoulou (2003, 91) notes that this is not necessarily implied by changing shapes and decoration. Rutter’s approach (in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 255) is to define the end of the LHIIBB period by ‘the major destruction-by-fire horizon that is such a pronounced feature of the stratification at the principal Argive citadels of Mycenae, Tiryns and Midea,’ and for him any pottery that follows must be defined as LHIIC ‘no matter how many LHIIBB survivals it may include.’ He rejects the use of the ‘cumbersome and potentially misleading “Transitional LHIIBB-LHIIIIC Early”’ and retains the term LHIIIIC Phase 1. This is followed by Gauss (in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 253). As for the early appearance of LHIIIIC features,
Demakopoulou (2003, 91) suggests that pottery types ‘hitherto assigned to LHIIIC Early, actually appeared earlier than had been believed, evidently in the latest LHIIIB2 period’ and really some overlap is only to be expected since these are modern definitions imposed on a continuous tradition.

There remains the problem of relating the widespread destructions that mark the end of the palatial period and beginning of the postpalatial period to each other. Jung (in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 254) suggests that ‘this revolutionary change… should be recognised by a change of chronological labels’ and this is certainly helpful. He makes the assumption that the palaces of the Argolid ‘met their final destruction at approximately the same time’ but cautions that ‘to assume that all Mycenaean palaces of the Aegean and even other sites in remote regions (Kastanas) were destroyed within a short period of time, i.e. more or less contemporarily… is surely an oversimplification’, albeit one that would make the synchronisation of chronology easier to deal with (Jung in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 254).

However, even to assume simultaneity for the destructions within the Argolid, based merely on proximity, may be begging the question, and perhaps unduly favours certain interpretations of their cause (this is discussed in more detail in chapter 3).

Dates of individual destructions themselves are also sometimes problematic. The destruction of the palace at Pylos has been placed early in LHIIIB, mid-LHIIIB late and at the end of LHIIIB and LHIIIC (Popham 1991; Mountjoy 1997, 109). This difficulty follows from using pottery style to date the destruction, since at Pylos the more easily dated painted vessels are rare and seem to have features of LHIIIA2, LHIIIB and LHIIIC Early. A similar difficulty seems to be apparent at Nichoria, where the ‘later part of the LHIIIB sequence… diverges considerably from that of the Argolid’, although a late LHIIIB2 date is likely, and Transitional LHIIIB2-LHIIIC types were present (Thomas 1994, 167). At Thebes too a similar problem has been encountered. This is due to the difficulty in understanding the relationship of buildings on the acropolis, which could be either two contemporary or successive palaces (Demakopoulou and Konsola 1981, 25-26; Shelmerdine 2001a, 340). It seems that several destructions affected Thebes from LHIIIA onwards (Dakouri-Hild 2001), but also it is argued that some of the Linear B tablets belong to LHIIIB2 (Shelmerdine 2001a, 373 n.276) and that the final destruction belongs to the end of this phase (Dickey 2005). The final destruction of the palace at Thebes, followed by some LHIIIC reoccupation, should fall at the end of LHIIIB2 or in Transitional LHIIIB2-LHIIIC, with the Pelopidou Street archive dating to that phase (Shelmerdine 2001, 356, 373 and n.276).

Nevertheless, some consensus seems to have been achieved. Mountjoy (1997; 1999, 36) argues that the palace at Pylos was destroyed somewhat later than Mycenae and Tiryns, since it contained material of her Transitional phase, and this has been accepted by Rutter and Jung (in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 254-255), and seems correct. Further, a destruction of ‘whatever in the way of a Mycenaean palatial establishment may once have existed on the Athenian Acropolis’ has been argued to be roughly contemporary to that at Pylos (Rutter in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 255). These took place after the destructions in LHIIIB2 of Mycenae, Tiryns and Midea. Rutter (in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 255) further notes that ‘there is every reason to believe that the Menelaiion in Laconia, Thebes and Orchomenos in Bocotia, and Dimini in Thessaly will turn out to have fallen victim to similar disasters within the time period marked by the destructions… at Mycenae, Tiryns, Midea, Pylos and Athens.’ Indeed, Adrimi-Sismani (2006, 474) has recently confirmed a Transitional LHIIIB2-LHIIIC date for the destruction of Megarons A and B at Dimini.

It may be that what has seemed to be an apparent simultaneity in the major destructions has been given too much significance, for example in Kilian’s hypothesis (1988a, 118, 134, 137, Fig. 10) that earthquakes were responsible for widespread and simultaneous destructions. Destructions dated to either side of adjacent ceramic phases could have taken place closer together than destructions within a given ceramic phase. Even within the Argolid, to assume that a single earthquake could have simultaneously devastated every major site is questionable, since very local geological characteristics, as well as the orientation of individual buildings, will have affected the potential destructiveness of any seismic activity. Nevertheless, some scholars, such as French, do see this as possible for the destruction of Mycenae, Tiryns and Midea (see chapter 3).

It is tempting and perhaps inevitable to assume that since the destructions appear to have been close together, and were undoubtedly significant events, they must therefore have been connected, and this chronological perception affects any collapse hypothesis. Thus Rutter (in Deger-Jalkotzy and Zavadil 2003, 255) states ‘the fiery catastrophes that marked the end of most Mycenaean palatial centres were not strictly contemporary, but rather extended over two ceramically recognisable subphases. This fact should neither surprise us nor cause us to alter our definitions of what we agree to be ceramically differentiable slices of time.’ Even so, it must be recognised that these destructions could have taken place over a period of some 25 years or more (Popham 1994, 281).

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[7] For more specific discussion of the pottery of this period see also Vitale 2006 and French forthcoming for an important discussion of ceramics from Mycenae and Tiryns. The author would like to thank Elizabeth French for supplying an advance copy of her article.
Destructions

LHIIIA1 (1400-1375BC)
Tyrrins: House 49 in the west Lower Town; Mycenae: Ramp House; Phylakopi: Megaron; Kea: Houses A, AB, C and F; The Menelaion: Mansion 2;
Nichoria: large building; Krisa: Building F; Athens: indicated by domestic pottery dumped in wells; Korakou; Pylos;

At the end of LHIIIA1 there were several destructions at major sites, often following new construction, although these did not lead to the total abandonment of the sites (Mountjoy 1993, 11-13). At Mycenae the Ramp House was reconstructed, indicating some kind of prior disturbance. In the Lower Town at Tyrrins, House 49 was abandoned and not rebuilt. The dumping of domestic pottery has also been taken to indicate disturbances at Korakou, where LHIIIB pottery was dumped into the East Alley. This also occurred at Athens, where pottery of LHIIB/LHIIIA1 was dumped into nearby wells, although normal clearing may be a perfectly valid explanation. In Lakonia, Mansion 2 of the Menelaion was abandoned in LHIIIA1 and there is no LHIIIA2 pottery, although there is some from elsewhere on site and it was later reconstructed to a new plan in LHIIIB, so the whole site may not have been abandoned (Catling 1977, 32; Dickinson pers. comm.). The large building at Nicheria in Messenia was also abandoned. At Pylos, there was a destruction at the palace. In Phokis, Krisa, a floor deposit of LHIIIA1 pottery in Building F suggests a disturbance. On Kea, at Ayia Irini several houses were destroyed, as was the large building beneath the megaron at Phylakopi that may belong to this phase (Renfrew 1978).

LHIIIA2 (1375-1300BC)
Mycenae: Pillar Basement/Palace; Tyrrins; Thebes: House of Kadmos (?)

Later building overlying earlier structures makes it difficult to draw conclusions about construction sequences during this phase (Mountjoy 1993, 15). At the end of LHIIIA2 the Pillar Basement and possibly the palace was destroyed, perhaps by earthquake (Mountjoy 1993, 15; French 2002, 59-61). Houses outside the citadel such as Petsas’ House, the Second Cyclopean Terrace House, the House of the Wine Merchant, and the House of Lead (Atreus Ridge) were also destroyed at this time. Buildings at Tyrrins were remodelled at this time. It is also possible that the House of Kadmos at Thebes was destroyed late in LHIIIA2 or early in LHIIIB, while other parts of the Kadmea were in use later (Dakouri-Hild 2001, 101, 106-107). At Pylos, the palace was remodelled during LHIIIA2 or early LHIIIB1. At Mitrou, in the Eubocean Gulf, there may be a destruction horizon at LHIIIA2 early, which may be significant in explaining the lack of evidence for LHIIIB occupation, although there is occupation from LHIIIC onwards, including a megaron (Building B) (AR 2006, 64-65).

LHIIIB1 (1300-1225BC)
Zygouries; Mycenae: Cult Centre, East Wing buildings, House of Oil Merchant and houses on Atreus Ridge such as Panagia Houses I and II. – ‘Earthquake’ evidence of body; Tyrrins: early in IIIB1 and mid-IIIB

During LHIIB destructions occurred at many sites (Mountjoy 1993, 19). In the Citadel at Mycenae, the newly constructed Cult Centre, Great Stair and East Wing Buildings (including the House of Columns and the Artisan’s Quarters) were destroyed at the end of LHIIIB1. Outside the citadel, the Panayia Houses I and II were destroyed in mid-LHIIIB, perhaps by an earthquake, since the body of woman crushed by falling stones was found in the doorway of Room 5; House I (French 1996, 51). At Tyrrins there were two destruction phases, one early in LHIIIB1 and the other mid-LHIIIB and, as at Mycenae, bodies were found under buried wall of the early LHIIIB Building X (Kilian 1996, 65). There was also a destruction at the end of LHIIIB1 at Katsingiri in the hinterland of Tyrrins (Kilian 1988a, 133). Zygouries has been thought to have been destroyed around this time (Mountjoy 1993, 20, 161) but there is a small amount of LHIIIB2 pottery present (Rutter 2000b) and reported activity in LHIIIC Middle (Morgan 1999, 365-366). Rutter further comments that both Zygouries and Tsoungiza appear to have become less intensively occupied after LHIIIB1, although again there was some LHIIIC Middle presence (Morgan 1999, 365-366). French suggests that Zygouries was destroyed earlier than Mycenae, and the destruction by fire was centred on a major building: the so-called Potter’s Shop (Dickinson pers.comm.). At Thebes, there were destructions in several areas, the Arsenal, the Loukou plot, the Lianga-Christodoulou complex and the Koroupoulou workshop, which have been dated to the end of LHIIIB1 (Dakouri-Hild 2001, 106-107).

End LHIIIB2/beginning LHIIIC Early (1225-1190BC)
Mycenae; Tyrrins; Pylos; The Menelaion; Midea; Korakou; Thebes; Athens: north slope houses; Dimini: Megarons A, B and associated workshops and storage areas (not earthquake according to excavator) + IIIC early reoccupation, Adrimi-Sismani 2006, 468, 474, 478; Pefkakia: settlement destroyed and abandoned (Adrimi-Sismani 2006, 476).

The widespread destructions and abandonments that took place c.1200 mark the collapse of the palatial system of the previous two centuries. In the Argolid and Corinthia there were destructions at Mycenae, Tyrrins, Katsingri, Korakou and Iria (Katsingri: Kilian 1988a, 133; Korakou: Mountjoy 1993, 20; Iria: LHIIIC Early according to Rutter 2000b); in Lakonia at the Menelaion; in Messenia, at Pylos; in Achaea, at Teikhos Dymaion; in Boeotia and Phokis, at Thebes, Orchomenos, Gla (Iakovidis 1990, 610) and Krisa, while the following sites appear to have

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8 This outline and approximate dates follow Mountjoy (1993, 11-25, 140), with additions.
been abandoned without destructions: Argolid and Corinthia: Berbati, Prosymna, Zygouries, Gonia, Tsoungiza; Lakonia: Ayios Stephanos; Messenia: Nichoria; Attica: Brauron; Boeotia and Phokis: Eutresis (Shelmerdine 2001a, 373 n.275; Morgan 1999, 365). At Korakou there was a major LHIIIC phase, including the multiphase House P (Dickinson pers. comm.). Thomas and Conant (1999, 16) note that while many buildings of the citadel at Mycenae were destroyed, the Granary, the North-east Extension and even the palace may have escaped destruction. At Dimini, megarons A and B and their associated workshops and storerooms were destroyed at this time, as was the nearby coastal site of Pefkakia (Adrimi-Sismani 2006, 468, 474, 476). The North Slope Houses at Athens may also have been destroyed (Mountjoy 1993, 20).

LHIIIC Early (c.1190-1130)
During LHIIIC Early there were further destructions at various sites. At Mycenae, Phase IX floor deposits were covered by fallen boulders, perhaps from an earthquake (French 1999, 223). Settlement in the Lower Town at Tiryns has at least 5 phases down to LHIIIC Middle (Maran 2002, 223). Phase 2 is characterised by courtyard houses, which were destroyed by fire at the end of LHIIIC Early and some of which show curvature in the walls, which may indicate earthquake damage (Maran 2002, 223; Kilian 1996, 63). At Lefkandi the settlement (Phase 1a) was destroyed by fire, the destruction deposit being part of the subsequent Phase 1b (Popham and Milburn 1971, 333-334). On Salamis, the important site of Kanakia, with its corridor type building (Building 1A) paralleling others from Mycenae, Tiryns, Thebes and Dimini, suffered destructions and was permanently abandoned sometime during LHIIIC Early (Lolos 2003, 107-108). In Lokris, the site of Kynos, storerooms were destroyed perhaps by an earthquake, possibly indicated by later shifting in the walls (Dakoronia 1996, 41).

LHIIIC Middle (c.1130-1070)
At the end of LHIIIC Middle the Granary and possibly the Palace at Mycenae were destroyed by fire but the houses over the former cult area were not harmed. In the Lower Town of Tiryns there were three destructions in this period, the middle one reportedly an earthquake. The final destruction at the end of LHIIIC Middle occurred on the Citadel and destroyed House W in the Lower Town. The new buildings at Lefkandi, constructed on a new alignment after the LHIIIC Early destruction were partially destroyed (Phase 2a) and restored (Phase 2b) but their end is uncertain (Mountjoy 1993, 140). At Kynos, the repaired storeroom was again damaged by fire and the site may have suffered a tsunami, possibly following an earthquake, reportedly not unusual for the area (Dakoronia 1996, 42). The buildings were repaired and used in LHIIIC Late and Submycenaean.

LHIIIC Late (c.1070-1050/30)
At Lefkandi, recent excavations seem to indicate that, contrary to what had previously been thought, there was no decline or abandonment of the settlement in the LHIIIC Late phase (Phase 3) (Lemos 2007a). Indeed, it seems the site was used continuously into Submycenaean and into PG.

As this compilation of data shows, the number of destructions that occurred over time indicates that such events were not unusual in the Late Mycenaean period. However, it should be noted that the term ‘destruction’, can be a loaded one, and as noted above, buildings can be destroyed for many reasons, and destruction could be considered a normal event in the history of site use. Dumps of earlier material could be part of normal clearing for continued use of parts of a site, and partial site destructions, especially when a site has not been fully excavated, are difficult to interpret but need not have been catastrophic or representative of hostile actions. The notable feature in terms of identifying the collapse of palatial Greece is that, following the destructions around the end of LHIIIB2 or in the Transitional LHIIIB2-LHIIIC Early phase, particular important sites identified as palaces were not reconstructed in the same fashion, or to the same extent, whereas previously they had developed in a palatial tradition, for example with successive megarons.

Population decline
One of the most notable features of the postpalatial period is the apparently drastic drop in population. This is reflected in the number of datable sites able to be plotted onto distribution maps between LHIIIB and LHIIIC (see chapter 5, Figure 5.1; Popham 1994, 282-283; Osborne 1996, 20-21). Snodgrass (2000, 364) noted around 320 sites occupied in the thirteenth century but only some 120 for the twelfth, and Desborough (1972, 18) thought the population reduced to a tenth of what it had been by the end of the twelfth century. Similarly high estimates have recently been made by Morris and Tandy (Dickinson 2006a, 93). Survey data, which plays a role in determining population, is discussed in more detail in chapter 5. Whether these estimates are accurate, how rapidly any reduction occurred, and whether it should be interpreted as catastrophic are unclear.

Desborough (1972, 240) noted that ‘to suppose a complete blank in habitation would be unnecessary and unrealistic.’ Some have suggested that fewer sites may indicate a transition to pastoral nomadism, in which the population would be difficult to detect, but this seems unlikely (Dickinson 2006a, 94). This argument, when not based on questionable assumptions about Dorians and their lifestyle (see chapter 3), is based on the apparent increase in cattle bones at Nichoria, but this has also been interpreted as due to elite activity or could simply be a local phenomenon due to the good pasture available; otherwise the crops grown in the postpalatial period seem to be essentially similar to those raised in the LBA (Foxhall 1995, 244-245, 248). Undoubtedly some of the reduction in sites can be ascribed to the nucleation of people at certain sites, but this could not compensate...
entirely for the supposed demographic changes, since most remaining sites are no bigger than in earlier phases (Dickinson 2006a, 63). Conversely, there may also be problems in identifying small sites that would represent a scattered population, but there is no evidence for the existence of such small sites (Dickinson 2006a, 93-94).

There may be problems with the evidence itself and the occurrence of other small ‘dark ages’ testify to this. One notable example is the sixth century hiatus on Crete, where temples became disused, monumental architecture and sculpture were largely absent, and pottery and other arts decrease in quantity, at least in so far as they are less archaeologically visible (Prent 1996-1997, 36). Many settlement sites appear to have ‘skipped’ this century, although the presence of legal inscriptions testifies to the existence of organised societies (Prent 1996-1997, 36, 45). Despite continuities as the archaeology becomes visible again, ‘several distinctive characteristics of the preceding age were lost’ (Prent 1996-1997, 45). Evidently people were present, however visible or invisible they are to archaeologists.

Ward-Perkins (2005, 142) strikes a cautious note concerning population decline after Roman collapse in the west, suggesting that ‘we cannot take the apparent lack of post-Roman sites at face value, as unequivocal evidence for a cataclysmic collapse of population in post-Roman times. But of course the same evidence does not compel us to assume that population levels remained constant.’ This applies equally to the situation in postpalatial Greece and ‘it is very dangerous to assume that the extremely marked drops in the number of identifiable sites... represents a proportional drop in the population’ (Dickinson 2006a, 70).

Nevertheless, it seems that although as Osborne (1996, 19) suggests ‘there was no wide-scale abandonment of the Greek peninsula’ it is hard to dismiss the idea that the there was population decline, and indeed this is to be expected in the aftermath of the destruction of major local sites, which probably had promoted some degree of stability and population growth over and above subsistence levels (Dickinson 2006a, 70). Indeed, the palatial region of Messenia appears to have experienced the most severe depopulation, with very little visible activity in LHIIIIC (Mountjoy 1999, 301; Dickinson 2006a, 55, 90). Some other areas, either non-palatial regions or those more distant from palace centres seem to have fared somewhat better with little or no apparent population decline, and in Achaean and the Ionian islands an increase of population is often suggested (Foxhall 1995, 244; Dickinson 2006a, 64). The situation was different from region to region, and it may be that what we are often discussing is actually the tendency of groups to utilise particular aspects of material culture that remain visible to archaeologists. While this in itself marks an important difference in habits, it is difficult to talk with any certainty about population levels.

Population decline itself could have had many natural and anthropogenic causes, although mass emigration has been rejected here for many reasons (see chapters 2, 3 and 5) and has been rejected by Snodgrass (2000, 365) and others. In a discussion concerned with Archaic Greece, but possibly relevant here, Vink (1996-1997, 9) has shown that during their peak period of founding colonies, archaic Corinth and Eretria also produced their biggest settlement assemblages. Argos did not found colonies but experienced a decline in settlement remains, and at Athens too, settlement did not seem affected by the founding of colonies (Vink 1996-1997, 9). Declining settlement evidence need not therefore suggest mass emigration and significant settlement evidence need not preclude emigration. However, ancient claims that colonies were founded by individual cities are probably unreliable, since they appear to be later constructions with a political bias, and the archaeology indicates a more complex picture (Osborne 1996, 8-17).

Warfare may be a better explanation, since it can explain the destruction and abandonment of settlements and the relocation of population (Vink 1996-1997, 10). According to Vink (1996-1997, 3 Fig. 1, 15), the continuity demonstrated in settlement assemblages at archaic Corinth, which contrasts with discontinuities at Argos, Athens and Eretria, may be explained by the fact that it seems not to have been involved in a war. Warfare and instability may also render agriculture, or habitation of certain areas, difficult or dangerous. That warfare or conflict on some level was normal in the LBA, and perhaps became endemic, at least in some areas, may possibly be suggested by the destructions outlined above. Changing settlement patterns can also be explained by economic changes (Vink 1996-1997, 15), and changing social practices can also cause a population decline, as can factors such as plague. The political fragmentation of collapse must in itself have been an important factor affecting population levels.

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to give a brief outline of the culture and archaeology of late Mycenaean Greece in the palatial period. Particular attention has been paid to the palatial culture that developed and the socio-political complexity of different regions in Greece. Communities in LBA Greece, while sharing aspects of material and presumably also non-material culture, chose to organise themselves in different ways. While in a few areas it is evident that quite powerful local kingdoms with literate bureaucracies and links overseas developed, and that the palaces at their centres made efforts to integrate outlying sites into their sphere of interest, there appears to have been a mix of more and less significant local centres throughout Greece. While buildings at sites such as the Menelaion and Kanakia are not regarded as true palaces, presumably they shared at least some of the ‘central place’ functions of palaces, while sites like Krisa and Teikhos Dymaion also may have functioned as the royal or chiefly centres of a different kind. In areas such as
Elis, there is no positive evidence (as yet) for any major local centre of any kind (Dickinson *pers.comm.*). It is plausible that the bigger and more complex polities may have sought to extend their reach across the Aegean, although the existence of ‘diplomatic’ links between Mycenaean kingdoms and the Great Kingdoms of the east, the Hittites, and to a greater degree Egypt, remain largely speculative.

The frequency of destructions has also been touched upon, and a list of LBA destructions given. While destructions were normal, and need not indicate anything other than rebuilding, the widespread destructions of major centres, palatial and non-palatial, around c1200 does suggest that they were in some way targeted. Finally, the apparent decline in population after c1200 was discussed and some possible causes outlined; further discussion of survey evidence is given in chapter 5.

Inevitably many of the issues touched upon in this chapter are controversial and difficult to offer firm conclusions about. The approach taken here therefore has been very deliberately not to attempt to suggest more certainty in conclusions than the evidence itself warrants. While this may be frustrating, caution is thought preferable to overconfidence.
2. COLLAPSE THEORY

Introduction
The collapse of societies has long been of interest to scholars, historians and the wider public, although Yoffee (2006, 132) notes that many of the beliefs people have had about collapse are extremely questionable, in particular those based on long held notions about the organic growth, maturity and decline of societies. Undoubtedly the increased close study of the collapse of societies has brought about a new recognition of its complexity. Archaeologists and social scientists have also committed more effort to researching collapse and this is marked by the increasing number of both general studies of theory and specialised studies of a variety of regions, not least the LBA Aegean. This chapter will examine the nature of collapse theory in recent archaeological and historical writing by critically reviewing key publications and attempting to discern trends in recent thought on collapse. Both general works on collapse and works referring to specific examples will be considered. This provides a broad theoretical context for the discussion of the collapse of palatial Mycenaean society which follows in chapter 3; it will be seen that many themes are of direct relevance.

Notable publications in the recent discourse on collapse that will be reviewed here are as follows: Tainter (1988) *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, which offers a general theory making use of evidence from a number of societies; Yoffee and Cowgill (1988), *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*, an edited volume containing papers on theory as well as specific case-studies of collapse in Mesopotamia, of the Maya, Teotihuacan, the Roman Empire and the Han dynasty; Ponting (1996), *A Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations*; and Diamond (2005) *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, which use case studies of various historical societies, as well as contemporary data. Recently, Yoffee (2006) has returned to the subject of collapse in *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*.

While the above publications have been selected as significant contributions to the general theory of collapse, it is also possible to examine recent publications in specific areas that offer useful comparative models for the Mycenaean collapse and which also help to identify changing trends in the archaeology and theory of collapse more generally. Since a study of any particular collapse may be aided by an interdisciplinary approach considering examples of collapse from other areas, it is considered useful to review some of the most recent studies. These concern the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, for which there are three recent publications, Heather (1995 and 2005), *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History*, and Ward-Perkins (2005) *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*, and the collapse of the Lowland Classic Maya. The Maya collapse has produced an enormous literature, but three recent publications are worth considering here: Lucero (2002), Gill (2000) *The Great Maya Droughts* and Webster (2002) *The Fall of the Ancient Maya: Solving the Mystery of the Maya Collapse*. Both of these fields are relevant here, not for direct similarities between material or other aspects of culture, but because of the approaches taken to their collapse.

Tainter 1988
Joseph Tainter’s *Collapse of Complex Societies* (1988) is a frequently cited volume in publications concerning collapse (Diamond 2005, 420). Tainter (1988, 4) defines collapse first of all as ‘a rapid, significant loss of socio-political complexity’ and is thus concerned with collapse as a political process, albeit often one with consequences in other areas, such as economics, art and literature. He distinguishes collapse from weakness or decline by its rapidity, taking no more than a few decades, with a substantial loss of socio-political structure. Societies that experience collapse must have been developing towards or have achieved a level of complexity for one or two generations. Complexity is regarded as a variable on a scale and is indicated by reference to such things as size, specialisation of groups and individual roles and the mechanisms of integrating these (1988, 23). He usefully identifies (Tainter 1988, 4) a number of manifestations of collapse that may be evident to differing degrees in collapsing and collapsed societies, and these will be returned to in the concluding chapter:

- A lower degree of stratification and social differentiation
- Less economic and occupational specialisation, of individuals, groups and territories
- Less centralised control; that is less regulation and integration of diverse economic and political groups by elites
- Less behavioural control and regimentation
- Less investment in the epiphenomena of complexity, such as monumental architecture, artistic and literary achievements etc
- Less flow of information between individuals, between political and economic groups, and between a centre and its periphery
- Less sharing, trading and redistribution of resources
- Less overall coordination and organisation of individuals and groups

A new volume of essays and case-studies on collapse (McAnany and Yoffee 2010) was unpublished at the time of writing, and so unfortunately could not be considered here. The volume was compiled largely in reaction to Diamond (2005), and, reflecting contemporary concerns, places some emphasis on ecology, environment and sustainability, as well as survival and post-collapse situations in a selection of societies.

10 Heather’s 2005 book sets in a wider context his views on the collapse of the Western Roman Empire already presented in an important article in 1995.
A smaller territory integrated within a single political unit.

Tainter’s task is to identify a general explanation of collapse, since it is a recurrent feature of human societies (1988, 5). In order to do this, he selected 20 case studies ranging from the Western Chou, the Western Roman Empire, the Mycenaens, Minoans and Hittites, to New World societies, including the Lowland Classic Maya, and some African examples (1988, 5-18). Brief narratives of their collapses are given and some general features of pre- and post-collapse disintegration are usefully noted (based on Renfrew 1979). As descriptions of potential scenarios, these seem applicable to various example of collapse, including the Mycenaean, and include:

- Breakdown of central authority and control before collapse, signalled by revolts and provincial breakaways. Declining government revenues may result in an ineffective military. Foreign challengers become more successful. The population become more disaffected as the hierarchy seek to meet new challenges by mobilising resources.
- Following disintegration, central direction fails and the centre loses prominence and power. It may be ransacked and abandoned. Smaller petty states emerge in formerly unified territories, of which the former capital may be one. These states may contend for domination entailing a period of perpetual conflict.
- Law and the protection of the populace are eliminated and lawlessness may prevail for a time before order is ultimately restored. Monumental construction and publicly supported art largely cease to exist.
- Remaining populations in urban or political centres reuse architecture though there is little new construction and this is mostly concentrated on adapting existing buildings. Larger rooms may be subdivided, flimsy facades built and public space converted to private. Previous forms of ceremonialism may be continued although this is attenuated and former monuments are allowed to decay. Residents may use upper rooms and allow lower ones to deteriorate. Monuments may be used as sources of building materials and when buildings become uninhabitable; the residents move rather than reconstruct it.
- Palaces and central storage facilities may be abandoned, along with centralised redistribution of goods and foodstuffs, or market exchange. Long distance and local trade may be markedly reduced and craft specialisation end or decline. Local self-sufficiency meets subsistence and material needs. Local styles in widely circulated goods such as pottery also become more common due to decreased regional interaction. Portable and fixed technology (e.g. hydraulic engineering systems) reverts to simple locally, rather than centrally, maintainable forms.
- There is often rapid reduction in population, whether as cause or consequence. Both urban and rural populations decline and many settlements are abandoned concurrently. The level of population and settlement may decline to that of previous centuries or millennia (after Tainter 1988, 19-20).

These points are descriptive rather than explanatory, and Tainter’s general thesis for explaining collapse can be encapsulated in the following key points (1988, 194).

Societies exist as problem solving organisations that require energy for their maintenance. Increasing complexity carries with it increased costs per capita, while increasing investment in socio-political complexity as a response to problem solving often reaches a point of declining marginal returns. At some point maintaining or increasing complexity becomes unsustainable and collapse to a simpler level follows. In essence then, Tainter’s explanation is an economic one.

While Tainter’s book remains an often-cited work on collapse (e.g. recently by Dickinson 2006a; Diamond 2005; Demarest et al. 2004a), contains much useful discussion, and presents useful summaries of the indicators of collapse, it has not been received uncritically. Bowersock (1991) does not find its arguments persuasive for various reasons. In particular the accounts of individual societies and Tainter’s reliance on older modern historical sources rather than archaeological evidence for his description of the Roman Empire, used as a major example of his theory of declining marginal returns (Tainter 1988, 148-152), are problematic. As a result, there are factual errors and questionable generalisations, and these must affect any evaluation of his general thesis. This is also the case in his description of Mycenaean society, which is extremely brief and general, and relies on older sources and perspectives. It also contains the basic error that settlement increased in the south-west Peloponnese after the collapse; this should surely read north-west, on the assumption that there was some movement into Achaea (Tainter 1988, 10-11).

Blanton (1990) is also critical of Tainter’s conclusions, as well as other specific points. He suggests (Blanton 1990, 422) that some examples given by Tainter actually run counter to his thesis, and this in what Bowersock (1991, 120) suggests is the most original chapter of the book. For Tainter’s examples of declining marginal returns in agriculture (Tainter 1988, 96-97), he also notes an over-reliance on one not unbiased publication, and a failure to mention conflicting data (Blanton 1990, 422).

With regards to his own area of expertise, Blanton questions the shrinkage to survivors in post-collapse societies and notes that in the Valley of Oaxaca, ‘regional boundaries were more open during periods of relative political decentralization’ (Blanton 1990, 422).
Tainter’s own description of China following the Western Chou collapse (1988, 6) also seems fairly positive: ‘the period of conflict produced some of China’s major philosophical, literary, and scientific achievements… In addition to many technical and economic achievements, Chinese political thought in its classical form emerged during the worst of the breakdown’. It is unclear from this example how rapid the process of collapse was in this case, since weakening control is observed by Tainter over two centuries from 934BC ending in the death of the last Western Chou emperor and the sacking of his capital in 771BC (Tainter 1988, 6). However, according to Tainter, collapse should take place within a few decades (1988, 4), to distinguish it from the vague and difficult concepts of weakness and decline, yet the case for collapse is unclear here.

Furthermore, complex political organisation still existed since, as Tainter himself points out, the Chou capital was moved east and the Eastern Chou dynasty resided there for over 500 years, although he observes that ‘Chinese unity effectively collapsed’ (Tainter 1988, 6). This example of collapse seems to rest entirely on the notion of the political unification of some regions under the Chou and its later breakdown, but this unity may in any case have been overstated. Higham (1996, 60) states ‘the Zhou, even during the apogee of their power, never directly controlled the area nominally within their boundaries. Rather, great overlords who acknowledged the supremacy of the central ruler, exercised considerable local sway which, as the Eastern Zhou progressed, saw the development of increasingly independent states.’ Of course, for Tainter collapse is, in the context of his book, solely a political phenomenon, but it seems clear at least that the identification of a collapse is sometimes a question of perspective or degree.

As noted, Tainter’s approach is essentially that of an economist, and both Myers (1989, 1065) and Bowersock (1991, 119) observe that it follows the processual approaches of Renfrew and Sabloff. He focuses on internal mechanisms of change, and argues that economic explanations come closest to success in explaining collapse (Tainter 1988, 90). He dismisses mystical explanations out of hand, those that rely on intangibles or biological analogy, but allows some partial merit to those that rely on resource depletion, new resources, catastrophes, insufficient response to circumstances, other complex societies, intruders, conflict/contradictions/mismanagement, social dysfunction, and chance concatenations of events, so long as they can be subsumed into a more general explanatory framework (Tainter 1988, 90). Diamond (2005, 420) notes that Tainter remained sceptical about collapse due to resource depletion because he thought people were unlikely not to adequately manage their environmental resources. However, individuals and groups do make bad decisions which can have serious effects on society, and this is well-known and widely discussed in organisational theory (Diamond 2005, 420). Despite this favour shown towards economic explanations, claimed as ‘structurally and logically superior’ (Tainter 1988, 90), Blanton (1990, 422) notes that ‘in the numerous instances of collapse… there is not one calculation of an average or marginal product. Instead, declining marginal returns to ‘investment in complexity’ are invoked simply when convenient, based largely on circumstantial evidence’.

While Tainter should be commended for attempting to collate data from and compare the collapses of many societies, it is perhaps inevitable that for specialists his accounts will be unsatisfactory, and this casts doubt on his general thesis. Any attempt to produce a monolithic and universally applicable explanation of collapse is perhaps misguided and does not pay attention to locally specific and unique situations. Furthermore, the insistence on the primacy of economic explanations may reflect the intellectual influences of Tainter, rather than historical facts, and it is not universally accepted. It must also be said that Tainter’s hypothesis suffers from an overreliance on process and structure, as opposed to personal agency and individual decision making, which cannot be easily dismissed as key factors in the operation of societies, as well as unique historical circumstances. Similarly, the specific processes of collapse, how a society actually breaks down to a simpler level, seem secondary to advancing the particular thesis. Nevertheless, the work remains a stimulating contribution to collapse theory, in particular in its summaries of the features of collapse, and contains much that is of value in stimulating further thought.

**Yoffee and Cowgill 1988**

This edited volume contains eleven essays, five of which are case-studies on Mesopotamia (Adams 1988; Yoffee 1988b), Mesoamerica (Culbert 1988; Millon 1988), the Roman Empire (Bowersock 1988) and China (Hsu 1988), while the others are theoretical and deal with the notion of collapse (Yoffee 1988a), the role of barbarians (Bronson 1988), the role of organisation in collapse (Kaufman 1988), continuity (Eisenstadt 1988), and a review chapter (Cowgill 1988). This publication, like Tainter (1988), is aimed at an academic readership, yet rather than aiming to produce any unified or general theory of collapse, the variety of specific case-studies and theoretical issues contributes more generally to the discourse on collapse. Indeed, Myers (1989, 1066) notes of Tainter (1988) and Yoffee and Cowgill (1988) that ‘the current state of the discipline seems to favor the more modest aims of case studies.’

Two chapters in particular highlight the difficulties of understanding collapse (Yoffee 1988a; Cowgill 1988),

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11 Sutherland 2007 (especially 70-72) presents a wide-ranging discussion of irrationality. Although archaeologists and historians often argue for, or attempt to interpret evidence as reflecting rational behaviours, individuals and groups often act irrationally for a number of reasons. Environmental mismanagement is only one of many such behaviours.
The concept is usefully divorced from ‘the death of great traditions (civilizations)’ which should be ‘dissociated from the failure of ancient states’ (Yoffee 1988a, 18). Thus there is an implicit acknowledgment of certain kinds of continuity despite collapse, and the volume focuses on political fragmentation (Yoffee 1988, 15). Collapsed societies such as those of the Lowland Classic Maya were part of great traditions which still exist in some areas, despite numerous political and other changes. Rather than offer a detailed review of each chapter, it is perhaps of most use to select aspects of Bronson’s chapter on the role of barbarians in the fall of states, Kaufman’s comments on collapse as an organizational problem and Eisenstadt’s contribution on collapse and continuity for comment.

Barbarians

Bronson discusses the role of barbarians in collapses and adopts a usefully vague definition of states as ‘any organization that exercises major political authority in a relatively centralized and institutionalised form over a relatively large and contiguous population,’ which is therefore widely applicable and contrasts with his ‘barbarians,’ who are simply members of non-state political units in contact with states (1988, 196, 200). He also offers a definition of collapse that does not include coups or dynastic changes nor gradual shifts in socio-political habits or the ethnic makeup of elites, but is made up of necessarily rapid, simultaneous and substantial changes in such features (Bronson 1988, 197). While admitting that states may fall for internal reasons, Bronson disputes the necessary relation of declines with falls, since often the definition of states in decline is quite subjective and his caution of the danger of circularity in arguments for decline and fall is important. Did all states that collapsed experience decline first? It may certainly be tempting for historians to identify a decline where a subsequent collapse is apparent, but whether this was in fact the case is often unclear.

Bronson (1988, 198-200) rightly notes the difficulty of identifying decline and its causes. Particularly valuable are his comments on the evident corruption, inefficiency and manifold shortcomings of bureaucracies and governance in societies during periods when no decline is identified, for example Restoration Britain. Signs that can be taken to indicate decline can thus equally be present in rising states, on their way to dominance. In particular, these factors are difficult to quantify and not clearly connected to collapse (Bronson 1988, 199). This sounds a note of caution against essentially economic theories of collapse, like that of Tainter (1988), in that what may seem like ‘waste in government’ or other seeming inefficiencies may not even be relevant. ‘Explanations that focus on bureaucratic bloat are also... suspiciously relevant to modern partisan political beliefs and should be received with caution on those grounds alone’ (Bronson 1988, 199).

More significant for Bronson (1988, 199) are the importance of successful military campaigns, and perhaps the avoidance of unsuccessful ones, and the effects of these on increasing and reducing resources. As for internal causes of collapse, he notes that these include economic recessions, revolution and civil wars (Bronson 1988, 200). External reasons include environmental and epidemiological factors, as well as warfare. In Bronson’s (1988, 213) view, barbarians are not the main cause of collapse, which he argues probably derive from internal factors and the actions of other states.

Moving on to his essential argument about barbarian involvement, Bronson (1988, 201) suggests that it is inherently plausible that barbarians could have played a role in the collapse of states because they have so often been associated with them: ‘large numbers of barbarians are much more likely to be suspiciously present at the time of death than either natural catastrophes or demonstrably unusual levels of inefficiency and corruption.’ However, when this is the case, it is not clear whether this is always a cause or an effect of collapse, and in fact a range of scenarios is possible. To this end, he suggests four self-explanatory analogies for barbarians: 1) vultures, 2) jackals, 3) wolves and 4) tigers. Of these, only the tigers unilaterally cause the demise of states. Many examples of successful barbarian groups are discussed by Bronson and their potentially complex and successful organizational capacity and military skills and abilities is well emphasised (Bronson 1988, 202-213). It is clear that barbarian armies could be large, as well as be a match for the armies of states, although while Bronson correctly considers the conventional wisdom that ‘the theoretical advantage of centralized over noncentralized polities is neither invariable nor insuperable’ to be wrong, there remain some problems with his argument.

He contends that it is cheaper for barbarians to assemble an army than for states (Bronson 1988, 204). While states have a variety of costs and expenses to account for, a barbarian war chief, on the other hand ‘has none of these concerns. His initial expenses are minimal and the cost of maintaining his army non-existent’ (Bronson 1988, 204). However, this surely underestimates the practical and logistical difficulties that would be encountered, especially by large groups, and the failure of a leader to ensure the well being of his group would undermine his authority. Dickinson (2006a, 47) has noted a lack of historical analogies for large groups of pirates able to live by raiding alone. A lack of institutionalised power structures could also provide an added destabilising factor for chiefs to contend with, and they might have greater problems ensuring loyalty while they were away. Furthermore, the other factors Bronson adduces are more concerned with advantages that barbarians may have had in defending themselves against states, rather than in attacking them, and there is a rather dubious focus on acephalous barbarian societies, which in any case he resolves in favour of the advantages
centralised states probably had in mobilising resources for their defence (Bronson 1988, 205).

Another major problem is the rather sweeping characterisation of barbarians as raiders, who are ‘poor and aggressive’ which is ‘a logical consequence of their outside status’ (Bronson 1988, 200). This conjectures a psychological motivation for barbarian behaviour based not on barbarians’ self-image but on an externally ascribed identity, one which is essentially a modern convenience following ancient habits. This kind of view follows from classical portrayals of barbarians, which owe as much or more to defining the in-group rather than realistically describing different peoples. It is doubtful that entire populations of barbarians viewed themselves only in comparison to those in state societies. This follows also for the notion that barbarians were somehow inherently warlike or aggressive in a way that those in states were not. Inhabitants of states like Sparta were trained and prepared for war and even in Athens most male citizens would have served in a military capacity at some point. But neither barbarians nor citizens need have been necessarily aggressive in any unusual sense. This and many other characterisations of barbarians seem rather based on notions culled from literary stereotypes. Also, while it is quite clear that the article mainly refers to the western Roman empire and its barbarians, it seems that it presents no widely applicable general model, since there are too many specific variables concerning the nature of individual states and their neighbours. The only fair conclusion is hardly a surprising or novel one, that neighbouring populations of differing levels of complexity and/or lifestyle may have engaged in different levels of mutual raiding and warfare when it seemed appropriate to do so and this may have caused or contributed to collapse in some cases.

Organisation
Kaufman (1988, 219) follows up one of the points made by Bronson (1988), noting that the ‘disintegration of overarching governmental organizations was a prominent feature of the process’ of collapse and thus may have been a cause of collapse, although admitting that this is difficult to identify or to differentiate as cause or effect. In the first place, Kaufman (1988, 220-223) describes the role that government, or the organising power, would have played in the daily life of individuals and society and emphasises the role of local figures: ‘in ancient polities most regional and central officials were in all likelihood distant, dimly perceived figures, while community leaders were familiar, lifesized individuals.’ Nevertheless, more centralised institutions played a key role in fostering the development of local areas in a diverse range of roles, from infrastructure projects such as dams, roads and irrigation to maintaining some level of security for agriculture, trade and communication to take place (Kaufman 1988, 220). The maintenance of these systems benefited the population at large and at all levels (Kaufman 1988, 221). An interesting point is made that although central and local authorities would need to work together on specific projects, an individual: would not usually see direct evidence of the central structures and might therefore have regarded most of the governmental services and constraints he encountered as local. And indeed, local leaders may well have had broad discretion in spheres not of concern to the central authorities (Kaufman 1988, 221).

This surely reflects a reality in the way that many ancient ‘governments’ operated, with a set of specific reactions, demands and targets, rather than broad policies, and acting on a comparatively small scale. Indeed, it is unfortunate, if a necessary inconvenience, that some word other than government could not have been employed.

Organisational problems would have led to various scenarios, which are classic statements of collapse theory (Kaufman 1988, 221). The pattern usually involves some kind of problem, e.g. with water, which leads to decreased productivity and a decrease in revenue. This in turn leads to increased taxes or demands for production and labour so that the central authority can maintain its revenue and try to solve the problem. Productivity and revenue may increase, but the cost is a greater burden on the workforce and their increased resentment. If revenue does not increase and the problem is not solved, the central authority continues to experience difficulties that, in turn, make it less able to cope with further difficulties. Thus a spiral into catastrophe is envisioned, with each problem setting off other problems in turn that may lead to conflict between local areas themselves and between local and central authorities (Kaufman 1988, 222). This is reminiscent of Bronson’s (1988, 197) analogy of a collapsing society as a broken machine, flying apart, and recalls Tainter’s model. Furthermore, it is argued that this would probably cause a breakdown of security, with neighbouring peoples and states ‘tempted to invade and seize territory, making war a normal state of affairs in the border regions,’ and these themselves will have had a knock-on effect both on agricultural production and exchange, thus Bronson’s scavengers could play a role (Kaufman 1988, 222-223; Bronson 1988, 213).

As for causes, Kaufman (1988, 223-230) identifies both exogenous and endogenous factors. These are familiar enough, with exogenous factors including natural disasters, environmental problems, factors outside their boundaries, such as trade partners finding new resources, or the disruption of trade through war. Endogenous factors include problems in the internal dynamics of political structures, such as divisions between or within factions. These could operate on different scales, resulting in civil war or weakness and inability to govern effectively. Cleavage could also occur between central and local authorities. Since central authorities relied on the cooperation of local authorities, their decision to opt out of the system would have been serious. Indeed, these are plausible interpretations of the failure of the imperial
system in the Western Roman Empire (see below and chapter 4). In fact, Kaufman (1988, 230) is describing a systems collapse: ‘any of the factors could have occurred independently in the first instance, but once it did, its effects rippled through the polity in question, tripping other factors until they were all activated and reinforced each other.’ This inevitably suggests that polities that may appear to be quite resilient, stable, and long lasting, may actually have been quite fragile systems, and also that chance may have played a considerable role in their long-term survival (Kaufman 1988, 233). This fragility applies more to the ‘overarching political entities’ rather than the component parts that comprised them, which may have been more ‘unified and durable,’ due to the increased damage that cleavage could cause to the system as a whole (Kaufman 1988, 234).

**Collapse and Continuity**

Implicit in Kaufman’s argument is that local organisations are more stable than supra-local power structures and this suggests that collapses may entail a degree of continuity, at least in the fact that some social relationships will continue. Despite the fact that many relationships may be broken, particularly on a supra-local level, this is certainly often the case. Eisenstadt (1988, 243) has offered a particularly interesting discussion, concentrating on the social process at work in collapse, which he suggests ‘presents… not only the end of social institutions, but almost always the beginning of new ones.’ In fact, collapse can be seen as the reformulation and restructuring of social boundaries (Eisenstadt 1988, 237).

Emphasised in this study are the nature and dynamism of social processes and social systems, which are neither static nor natural, and are always ‘in the process of being constructed’ (Eisenstadt 1988, 237). Within any given society, the population may be involved in a variety of different systems, political, economic, social and ideological, and while these systems are connected they may change in different ways and at different speeds (Eisenstadt 1988, 238). These may be bound together through mechanisms of social control and integration ‘by a combination of organizational structures (e.g. bureaucracies, legal symbols) and systematic restructuring – through processing of socialization, communication, and public and semi-public rituals’ (Eisenstadt 1988, 239). Elites are characterised as ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ who ‘compete to articulate the interests of the various groups, and so to mobilise their resources’ (Eisenstadt 1988, 240-241).

This setting of social processes is also a venue for competition and conflict which is inherent because of the individuals involved and the variety of ‘principles of cultural orientation’ within it (Eisenstadt 1988, 241). Eisenstadt (1988, 241) thus identifies the possibility that ‘antisystems’ may exist or arise and that these may sometimes be focussed around secondary elites. The ‘Stoic resistance’ in imperial Rome may constitute one kind of antisystem while emergent Christianity may represent another kind. These do not necessarily present problems, they could in fact act to galvanise an elite system, but they may ‘constitute, under propitious conditions, important foci of systemic change’ (Eisenstadt 1988, 241). This can happen when power shifts occur or demographic patterns change, or through contacts with other external groups, such as barbarians or trading partners. What actually happens is not further reducible to a pattern but depends on each specific society. Prime amongst Eisenstadt’s (1988, 242) concerns, therefore, is that ‘the investigation of collapse in ancient states and civilizations really entails identifying the various kinds of social reorganization in these types of societies and so viewing collapse as part of the continuous process of boundary reconstruction.’

**Discussion**

The three chapters discussed above present some very useful ideas for considering collapse. In particular, it is useful to highlight the nature and interaction of elites and governance and to set this within a dynamic social context that accepts a degree of faction, divided loyalties and competing motivations as normal (Wright 2001). The possible existence or development of various kinds of antisystem and their possible effects should also be borne in mind. It is also useful to note how problematic the notion of decline actually is; in particular it is difficult to identify without a degree of subjectivity or circular arguments. It is significant that what are sometimes identified as features of decline may be present in successful societies, or societies that do not or at least have not yet collapsed.

It is clear however that while these chapters sometimes seem to suggest generally applicable models for or descriptions of collapse, in fact this is rather difficult given the variety of specific factors involved, and indeed this is recognised by the authors. While processes and even causes and effects may appear to be superficially similar in any specific examples of collapse, they may actually have been very different in terms of what was experienced by people at the time. Attempting to create general models may thus be unwise since from the perspective of archaeology and history they tend to ignore the specific and real experiences of individuals and groups, which culture specific research rightly retains as its focus.

**Ponting 1996**

Ponting’s book is aimed at the general public rather than a scholarly audience and its aim is to look at world history from a ‘green’ perspective (1996, xiii). It does not claim originality and, as with Tainter (1988), suffers from the author’s reliance on secondary material referring to various societies and periods from remote prehistory to

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12 A new edition was published in 2007 and uses the collapse of the Western Roman Empire as its central example. Ponting argues that it collapsed due to overexpansion and misuse of natural resources (see below for other arguments).
modern times. It also has the deliberate intention to utilise Ponting’s view of the ancient past, especially his view of human interaction with the environment, as examples for modern society. As a result, there are many generalisations that scholars may find questionable, such as the reliance on forced labour to create the great monuments of antiquity, such as the great pyramids of Egypt (Ponting 1996, 269). An example, pertinent to the Aegean and Egypt, concerns the Sea Peoples (Ponting 1996, 86). It is argued that a fall in food production, caused by lower Nile flood levels after c.1150BC caused political and social problems due to difficulties in supplying food to non-producers, the army in particular. This occurred at a time when Egypt was under external pressure from the Sea Peoples, who were attempting to settle in the Delta. However, the Egyptians defeated the Sea Peoples attacks, so the specific point that Ponting is trying to make is unclear. It cannot be doubted that food shortages have caused problems in many societies, but before a generalised model can be created the extent to which particular societies were made up of dependent non-producers requires more detailed analysis. In the LBA Aegean, as in many other preindustrial societies, it is likely that the greater part of the population were subsistence farmers.

Ponting distances himself from the position of Tainter and emphasises the effects of resource depletion and environmental mismanagement. He cites the difficulty in balancing the need for production and the ability of the environment to sustain intensive agriculture over long periods (Ponting 1996, 87). This imbalance, he argues, caused overstretch and, focussing on Mesopotamia, he follows a similar line to Tainter: ‘the demands of an increasingly complex society began to overstretch the capacity of the agricultural base of society to support the large superstructure that had been erected. In the end, the unwanted, and unexpected, side effects of what at first appeared to be solutions to environmental difficulties became problems themselves’ (Ponting 1996, 87). Responses to these problems seem to have involved internal revolt and strain as the elite attempted to siphon off more produce for themselves. Ponting (1996, 87) further comments that there were only a few cases of the collapse of whole societies, for example the Maya, or wholesale abandoments of land. However, few Mayanists would now be so sweeping in their view of the Maya collapse, and Ponting’s views follow Culbert (1973 cited in Ponting’s Further Reading, 409; see also Culbert 1988), who argued for overstretch and the failure to maintain an appropriate population-subsistence balance, thus increasingly intensive agriculture failed to cope with unexpected stresses.

While Ponting usefully sets out to use such examples to focus present day readers on the effects humans have on the environment, his conclusions about historical collapse are sometimes vague. He reminds us that environmental degradation may, but does not always, lead to social breakdown (Ponting 1996, 401). When it does happen, it may be prolonged and with regard to Mesopotamia, the example cited above, he concluded that ‘the decline and eventual collapse… came about gradually over at least a thousand years’ (Ponting 1996, 401). It is difficult to understand in this case, over such a prolonged period of time, exactly how this is to be regarded as an example of collapse, and as noted above, it is difficult to accurately identify decline, as opposed to chronic corruption, inefficiency or irrationality (c.f. Yoffee 2006, 140-160). Although undoubtedly useful in focussing attention on the relationship between the environment and human societies, there is little specific evidence from many ancient societies on which to develop strong arguments. It is also often a difficult to classify human caused environmental change in a neutral way. Finally, Ponting is interpreting the past with a view to educating people in the present about a specific issue – his history is not objective but moralising.

**Diamond 2005**

Diamond (2005) combines the approaches of Tainter (1988) and Ponting (1996) in producing a popular yet scholarly work that attempts to incorporate theory, as well as detailed and up-to-date case-studies of ancient societies, and that has an environmental focus. For Diamond, collapse means ‘a drastic decrease in human population size and/or political/economic/social complexity, over a considerable area, for an extended time’ and amongst other societies, he cites the collapse of Mycenaean Greece as an example of a fully-fledged collapse (Diamond 2005, 3). Although the book was intended to focus on anthropogenically caused environmental damage, with a message similar to that of Ponting, he admits that he knows of no ‘case in which a society’s collapse can be attributed solely to environmental damage; there are always other contributing factors’ (Diamond 2005, 11). However, despite the comment that ‘it would be absurd to claim that environmental damage must be a major factor in all collapses… It’s obviously true that military or economic factors alone may suffice’ (Diamond 2005, 15), the arguments detailed in the book retain an environmental perspective to which other factors are connected. Accordingly, he devised a five-point framework of factors that may contribute to environmentally caused collapse (Diamond 2005, 11):

- Environmental damage
- Climate change
- Hostile neighbours
- Friendly trade partners (all of which ‘may or may not prove significant for a particular society’)
- Societal responses to environmental problems.

The first two factors essentially cover human caused environmental damage and natural climate change. The third suggests that ‘collapses for ecological reasons or other reasons often masquerade as military defeats’ (Diamond 2005, 13). This may be because a weakened society is no longer able to feed an army to hold off its
enemies and is defeated and collapses. Among possible cases both the Western Roman Empire and the Mycenaean are cited, though Diamond (2005, 14) draws no definite conclusions here. The fourth factor refers to the notion of interlinked systems, whereby if a friendly trade partner is weakened or becomes hostile, this will have a knock-on effect, especially if imports are essential for maintaining either physically or ideologically necessary systems. The fifth factor concerns a society’s responses to problems, environmental or otherwise, in which some societies respond successfully but others do not. This final factor, involving human choice and agency may be regarded as an improvement on theories that are restricted to processes.

Although the case-studies are regarded by some as the most valuable part of the book (e.g. Tainter 2005) they are not entirely beyond bias. Since Diamond’s intentions are to provide a warning to the modern world (Qirko 2005), he tends to place more emphasis on incorporating research that supports this into his syntheses. Like Ponting (1996, 1-7), he begins his case-studies with the story of Easter Island (Diamond 2005, 79-119), an often used parable of potential global catastrophe through misuse of finite resources and failure to respond appropriately. Indeed, like Ponting (1996, 7), he makes this metaphor explicit (Diamond 2005, 119). Kirch (2005) agrees that the historical outline is fairly accurate and that Diamond is right to conclude that through population increase and clearance of woodland for agriculture, coupled with environmental fragility prior to European contact, ‘the Rapa Nui gradually followed a pathway leading to societal terror and collapse not because they were ‘eco-vandals’ but because they lacked critical understanding of how their island’s environment functioned and thus failed to take steps which might have averted their fate’. This is perhaps not surprising since Diamond makes use of Kirch and his colleagues’ research (Kirch 2005). However, other perspectives on Easter Island are equally admissible. Rainbird (2002) sets Rapa Nui in the context of other Pacific islands, and argues that ecodisaster and collapse really took place after European contact, pointing to the evidence for successful subsistence strategies up until 1804. This reminds us of the ambiguity between collapse and change, and in how anthropogenically caused environmental change is considered – Rainbird argues for successful responses to human caused problems without denying that the problems existed. Nevertheless, the comments of Qirko (2005) are pertinent when he states that ‘Diamond’s own analysis makes it clear that, in many cases, societies are not choosing at all but, rather, are at the mercy of processes which they can have no awareness of control over.’ Diamond’s point of seeking to explain the role of choice is thus vague since it is not clear why some societies do succeed while others do not and what role choice plays in this (McElreath 2005).

Another criticism levelled by several scholars concerns Diamond’s choice of the society as a unit of analysis (Demeritt 2005; Hornborg 2005). Hornborg (2005, S94) notes the absence of the role of cultural specificities and social structure, which must play a part in shaping historical processes and events. Cultural groups like the Maya are treated as units, where more rightly they were groups made up of independent, if interlinked, polities within a culture zone, and it is unclear how or to what extent these units or even individual polities could make choices (Demeritt 2005, S94). On a comparative level, it is also questionable as to how appropriate or useful analogies between Maya kings and modern American CEOs or the Bush administration can be, although they may serve the author’s purpose of engaging the reader (Hornborg 2005, S94). Tainter (2005, S98) in particular criticises the book for a lack of argumentation, especially when Diamond is unable to prove that the environment has been the central factor in societals collapses. This failure is significant, since it was the author’s express aim. Apart from that, Diamond’s contribution to the scholarship on collapse is perhaps most useful for its synthesis of recent research on collapsed societies and for its readability, rather than any real theoretical advance in this field.13

Yoffee 2006

Yoffee (2006) has contributed most recently to the literature on collapse and suggests specific ways in which collapse must be studied. He suggests that in studying the rise of societies, social change is seen as ‘a succession of levels of holistic sociocultural integration’ and collapse ‘requires that levels be broken down into institutional groupings of partly overlapping and partly opposing fields of action’ which allow for instability as well as stability in social institutions (Yoffee 2006, 131). Thus, the forces that drive social integration must be seen as reversible and subject to flux and this concurs with the notion of social groups as potential cleavage points. Yoffee (2006, 132) notes that collapse theorists have challenged the view that human systems tend to persist or expand, and have argued that early states were not necessarily in harmonious adjustment, nor victims of extraneous disturbances or developmental deviations. These are valuable perspectives which emphasise that emergent and early states were not necessarily stable or long-lasting socio-political structures and equally that there was no necessary need for external factors to cause their collapse or failure to endure indefinitely. He further emphasises that early states were little understood by their occupants and were far from perfect institutions; they functioned with ‘a good deal of bungling and by generating considerable conflict’ (Yoffee 2006, 132). Thus states could exist whilst exhibiting what some would identify as factors of decline or gross inefficiency. Furthermore, faction and conflict of interest must be seen as dynamic factors in the rise and collapse of societies, and the level of objective individual or group awareness of how societies functioned should not be overestimated.

13 See now McAnany and Yoffee (2009).
Perhaps most importantly, Yoffee (2006, 134) notes that when collapse occurs, it does not constitute ‘a total institutional breakdown’. This conclusion he reaches by suggesting that a neo-evolutionary paradigm, one that suggests holistic changes to institutions in the rise of complexity, and therefore total collapse, is inadequate (Yoffee 2006, 134). Particular issue is taken with Flannery’s (1972) notion of hypercoherence, where a centralized authority bypasses local authorities and creates new social possibilities. These mechanisms can become ‘pathologies’ that disrupt stable systems by creating special systems, which then cannot cope with the same success as the previous stable systems. Total failure through hypercoherence happens when any part of the system fails because all the systems are so ‘integrally connected’ (Yoffee 2006, 135).

On the other hand, Yoffee sees utility in Simon’s notion of ‘near-decomposability’ (Simon 1965). Complex systems, it is argued, are hierarchically composed of many stable lower and intermediate level units that have strong horizontal but weaker vertical connections. In collapse, it tends to be those more strongly linked intermediate and lower level, or localised units, that predate the novel higher-level units, which survive. Post-collapse continuity, or regeneration, not necessarily identical to the collapsed form, is clearly possible, since there are social units present that can form new hierarchical arrangements (Yoffee 2006, 137). This perspective seems useful and plausible, as, in the absence of the total annihilation of the population, and thus every social system, there must be continuities, and these are bound, in some way, to involve existing relationships.

In contrast to an explicitly systems based approach, which may tend 'to invite increasingly elaborate abstractions,' Yoffee (2006, 137) suggests that our task in investigating collapse is 'to delineate the patterns of social roles and identities that were created, manipulated, reproduced and reconfigured in ancient states and to understand the circumstances in which identities were altered and even relinquished.' Thus his approach rightly takes more account of the actions and motivations of individuals and groups as well as accepting that times of collapse may be appropriate for changes in constructing identities and involves appreciating that there are inherent structural tensions within states, for example between rival factions. However, such investigations may encounter problems in terms of evidence, as is the case in postpalatial Mycenaean Greece, although it seems possible at least to observe some changes in material expression.

So for Yoffee, collapse is never total, rather it means ‘a drastic restructuring of social institutions, usually in the absence of a political center’ (Yoffee 2006, 134). This is seen within the context of early states as experiencing tension between centre and periphery. Centres seek to detach political action from peripheries, made up of aristocracies, kin groups, peasants, craftspeople and merchants, which try to retain local autonomy. At the same time, centres recruit from peripheries independently of traditionally ascribed roles while at the same time, in order to command resources, it must offer something to peripheries, for example juridical and cultural systems or increased territory or goods (Yoffee 2006, 138-139). Stability occurs when this balance is successful for each group but instability and collapse may ensue when this balance is disturbed. This may happen if peripheral needs or the needs of specific groups are not met and the centre is unable to secure resources from the periphery. Thus centralised institutions may collapse when no longer supported by the periphery. Yoffee (2006, 140) notes that one critical factor for stability is ‘the transformation of a loyal and personally ascribed cadre of supporters into a bureaucratic hierarchy in which organizational self-perpetuation is subservient to the establishment of political goals’. However, success in creating such a system does not guarantee its maintenance in the long term, which must be achieved by creating widespread support for the system and constantly meeting a range of demands from different groups.

Yoffee’s views are certainly important for considering collapse, and although others have adopted different approaches, his may be considered as representing important progress. He does not advance any general theory to explain societal collapses, but rather offers a useful way of approaching the phenomenon, in particular as a social process, whilst offering constructive contextualising ideas about the notion of ancient societies themselves. These ideas will be returned to in the subsequent chapters.

Recent approaches to specific examples of collapse

The section above has focused on selected contributions to the wider field of collapse studies. This section will briefly examine some recent approaches to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and the Lowland Classic Maya, two well-known fields of collapse studies.

The Western Roman Empire

One trend in the scholarship of the end of the Western Roman Empire noted by Ward-Perkins (2005, 3-10) is the increasingly positive characterisation of the period, which had traditionally been defined by violence, decline and fall. He notes that Peter Brown, in defining the period of Late Antiquity, from the third to eighth centuries AD, suggested that catastrophe and decay could be omitted from the history of the period (Ward-Perkins 2005, 4). The language used to describe the period has also changed and terms such as decline and crisis, common in the 1970s, are now rare and have been replaced by transition, change and transformation. Although these are shifts in terminology, they undoubtedly affect perceptions of collapse and characterisations of historical processes and events.

The role of barbarians has also changed, with violence, invasion and disruption transformed into peaceful
accommodation (Ward-Perkins 2005, 5). As representative of this shift, he cites Walter Goffart (1980, 35) in particular, who stated that ‘what we call the Fall of the Western Roman Empire was an imaginative experiment that got a little out of hand.’ He further notes that much of the violence and catastrophe once associated with the collapse has been erased by scholars who have expanded Goffart’s views, with comments about barbarian settlement occurring ‘in a natural, organic, and generally eirenic manner’ (Mathisen and Shanzer 2001, 1-2, quoted in Ward-Perkins 2005, 10).

While rightly accepting that there are positive aspects to this revisionism, Ward-Perkins seeks to challenge this position, stating that ‘the coming of the Germanic peoples was very unpleasant for the Roman population, and that the long-term effects of the dissolution of the empire were dramatic’ (2005, 10, 180-181). In order to do this, he demonstrates through texts, that violence and the threat of violence was a reality of the period (Ward-Perkins 2005, 13-31). He also successfully demonstrates a significant decline in material living standards, showing that the relatively widespread prosperity of Roman times, indicated by such things as the common use of roof-tiles, even on low status agricultural buildings such as sheds in Italy, disappeared in the fifth and sixth centuries, when only a few elite buildings used tiles (Ward-Perkins 2005, 95, 109). Pottery in the west also shows an equivalent picture of declining material standards, especially when compared to the development and diffusion of new styles in the east (Ward-Perkins 2005, 88-93, 104-108). Handmade and badly fired wares became the norm, even for elites, and pottery was no longer produced or traded on a large scale in Britain and Spain (Ward-Perkins 2005, 104). Other examples also reinforce the picture of significant material decline.

Ward-Perkins (2005, 117) suggests that the collapse meant no mere recession or reduction of the fourth century economy, but a qualitative change to a ‘very different and far less sophisticated entity.’ He further suggests that in many areas the level of complexity fell to a lower level even than in pre-Roman times, with only isolated examples amongst elite groups (Ward-Perkins 2005, 117-120). None of this happened at one particular point of collapse, but at different times and rates across the Western Empire (Ward-Perkins 2005, 123). In North Africa and Italy there may have been periods of decline and recovery, whereas in Britain complexity seems to have reduced much more rapidly with the withdrawal of Roman power in the early fifth century (Ward-Perkins 2005, 128). It seems that different trajectories were possible in different areas, which must owe something to pre-collapse arrangements.

According to Ward-Perkins (2005, 136), the collapse of the ancient economy was due to overspecialisation, a complex and interlinked system that was fragile and not adaptable to change. Skilled manufacturers, a sophisticated network of exchange, and a large number of consumers were all necessary for the successful continuation of this system, as was the maintenance of an infrastructure of coins, roads and so on. Disruption of parts of this system and the end of security meant its failure and a reversion to local skills and self-sufficiency.

This may also have had an effect on population (Ward-Perkins 2005, 138-139). Survey reveals a change from a densely settled Roman landscape to one that was only sparsely settled in post-Roman times and evidence also seems to show declining urban populations. Rightly, however, Ward-Perkins (2005, 142) notes that survey evidence is not always a reliable guide to population, since settlements and buildings or signs of habitation may have become archaeologically invisible.

He suggests that there was no inevitability about the fall of the Western Empire in the fifth century, and emphasises the number and scale of Roman military expeditions, some of which were successful, but all of which show that major projects could still be undertaken by the Roman authorities (Ward-Perkins 2005, 57-58). Had particular individual events turned out differently, the history of the period could have been very different. Nevertheless, this suggests a fragility to the overarching socio-political and economic system engendered by the empire. This fits with the notions of early states describe by Yoffee, and mentioned above.

Peter Heather (1995; 2005) has also focussed on the fundamental role of Hunnic and Germanic population movements and local reactions to them in causing the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. Like Ward-Perkins, he argues that this process was one that took perhaps a century to work through and affected different areas at different rates. He specifically develops three arguments (Heather 1995, 37). Firstly, he argues that the presence of the Huns on the fringes of Europe caused the Germanic invasions of AD376 and 405-08 and that this provides a coherent explanation of Rome’s frontier problems at this time. He then links this with the eventual deposition of Romulus Augustus, since the invasions and their after-effects eroded the power of the state in a variety of ways, both economically and in terms of prestige and loyalty to the state. When the state could no longer provide, local Roman elites sought to deal with the new political realities created by groups with different political agendas, siding with the new powerful military groups or asserting themselves militarily and politically (Heather 1995, 22, 37). The third aspect is the disappearance of the Huns as a political force, leaving the Western Empire without outside military assistance (Heather 1995, 38).

Heather (1995, 38-39), in opposition to Tainter (1988, 128-152), thus sees the collapse of the west as a ‘foreign policy crisis’ that created a new and different internal political situation to which local elites accommodated themselves and, like Ward-Perkins, suggests that without
these events, there is ‘not the slightest sign that the Empire would have collapsed under its own weight’. Collapse in this case depended on the effect of particular historical events and the way in which people adapted to the results of these events.

The Lowland Classic Maya

Differing views of the Lowland Classic Maya collapse still abound, thus only a brief and selective overview of recent mono- and multi-causal approaches will be given here. What has particularly transformed the study of the Classic Maya is the decipherment of their writing system, which reveals a mass of specific historical data that sheds light on political and military history and Maya culture and society (Fash 1994, 193-195).

Lucero (2002) has focussed on the role of water control as a central aspect of political power in major Maya centres, with kings monopolising artificial reservoirs and water sources. She argues that a reduction in the amount of water as a result of climate change undermined the position of rulers and the institution itself, and that this caused the political collapse of regional centres (Lucero 2002, 820). Her argument is particularly interesting because it offers a model that explains the variability present in the Maya collapse. Major royal centres such as Tikal, Calakmul and Caracol relied heavily on artificial reservoirs while their elites projected their ability to guarantee water supply and used this to maintain their position and receive tribute (Lucero 2002, 818). When the water supply declined, much more intensively populated royal centres were abandoned, but this did not necessarily affect hinterlands, where subsistence practices were maintained. This decline of royal centres in turn affected secondary centres, whose rulers participated in regional politics by interacting with other rulers in alliances, marriages, exchange and warfare (Lucero 2002, 819). At this level, there were varying responses to the collapse of major centres; closely linked secondary centres were largely abandoned by the ninth or tenth centuries AD, while other secondary centres asserted their independence and even prospered and the hinterlands of some collapsed secondary centres also continued in use. Some major centres continued without royal ideology. Tertiary centres tended to survive the collapse of major centres (Lucero 2002, 820).

This argument usefully applies evidence of climate change or shifting weather patterns to political ideology, showing how changing circumstances may have affected the royal ideology of leaders at major centres and the knock-on effects of their collapse on smaller centres that were reliant on different elite maintenance strategies. It is notable that royal ideology at major centres and at some closely connected secondary centres, where it was most closely associated with water control, ended, while different royal ideologies sometimes continued at secondary centres, and hinterlands and some other centres continued without royal ideology.

Lucero (2002, 821) also gives a modified picture of population change during and after the collapse, usually thought to have been a period of devastating decline and migrations. She suggests that, in the hinterlands, many people may have reverted to (or continued) building non-platform houses, invisible in the archaeological record, and that there may have been some migration. New forms of community level organisation developed, and various regions, such as Petén Itza Lakes area, remained inhabited, although with new traditions (Rice and Rice 2004). Furthermore, she states that her approach is deliberately only intended to provide a ‘general organizational framework’ rather than a model which fits and explains all situations of political history (Lucero 2002, 814).

Gill (2000) has focussed on megadrought as the single exogenous cause of the Maya collapse. He argues that a series of megadroughts, prolonged periods of severely reduced rainfall, can be associated with Maya collapses around AD150-200, the Classic ‘hiatus’ of AD530-590, the Classic collapse of the seventh and eighth centuries and the postclassic abandonment around AD1450. In the Classic collapse, he envisions crops failing and even rivers and lakes drying up, ‘when the rains failed, the reservoirs dried up, and the people had no water to drink’ (Gill 2000, 271). Much scientific evidence has been interpreted to suggest droughts associated with these collapses. Hodell et al. (1995) used temporal variations in oxygen isotope and sediment composition in core samples from Lake Chichancanab, Mexico, to construct a history of climate change in central Yucatan. They suggest that the period from AD800-1000 was the driest period of the last 8000 years (Hodell et al. 1995, 393). More recently, data derived from the titanium content of sediments in the Cariaco Basin of the southern Caribbean has been interpreted to show an extended dry period, punctuated by more intense multi-year droughts around AD810, 860 and 910 (Haug et al. 2003).

However, this evidence is problematic in its explanation of the Maya collapse, since it ignores the complex link between large scale and local climatic events (Webster 2002, 243). The evidence is used to explain the collapse in the wetter more fertile and better watered southern lowlands, but cannot at the same time explain why areas much closer to the sources of evidence (central and northern Yucatan), much drier and more difficult to farm, appear to have prospered precisely at the time of the alleged drought (Webster 2002, 244-245).

Webster (2002) accepts that drought may have played some part in Maya history, but in contrast to Gill, he offers an excellent multidimensional, multi-causal and thus more realistic view of the Maya collapse, or collapses, which occurred over a long period of some 200 years. He emphasises that the Lowland Classic Maya ‘never embraced some monolithic political or cultural identity that was everywhere vulnerable to some sudden disastrous disruption…’ and that ‘the patterns of collapse
or decline are so different from one place to another that no single, simple cause will ever explain what happened to the Classic Maya…’ (Webster 2002, 294). This is supported by Demarest (2004) and others (see papers in Demarest et al. 2004a).

The interrelations between regions and sites are also highlighted, so that collapse becomes ‘a communicable phenomenon: what happened to one kingdom or population or local ecosystem affected others in non-random ways’ (Webster 2002, 294). Webster also notes, importantly, that conclusions about the Maya collapses are conditioned by the nature of the evidence at particular sites, which may or may not comprise epigraphic data, palaeoenvironmental data, settlement and architectural data (Webster 2002, 294). Thus any apparent explanation is affected by the data from which it is inferred and differences in evidence may obscure similarity in causes; meanwhile while similar data may lead to similar conclusions even though actual causes of collapse could have been different. This is a notion applicable in a wide range of collapses.

Webster (2002, 327ff.) himself suggests that three factors in particular triggered collapse. The most important of these was the vulnerability of the Maya population to the deterioration of agricultural and other resources (Webster 2002, 328-337). While sometimes being reasonably productive agriculturally, there were risks, bottlenecks and limitations, related to cultural and environmental factors. Webster (2002, 330) notes that several areas experienced deforestation and erosion and experienced periodic cycles of growth and abandonment before the Classic collapse and that mobility was an early solution to this. Assuming even optimal weather conditions and land quality, Maya agriculturalists could produce only small surpluses. A range of natural hazards such as climatic variation, drought, hurricanes, locusts and plant disease also prevented optimal conditions, though Webster (2002, 331) notes that as long as populations were relatively low, the Maya survived these.

Agricultural intensification, the use of marginal land, increased land use and decreased fallow time, terracing and drained fields have all been suggested as solutions and adaptations, and Webster (2002, 335) suggests that what may have been successful short-term solutions to coping with population increase were unsuccessful in the long-term, increasing production shortfalls and decreasing environmental quality. This is somewhat similar to Culbert’s (1988) notion of overshoot, where an increasing population creates increased pressure on resources and carries an inherent risk if factors such as climate, land quality or other environmental factors change. Inevitably some of these factors do change since human expansion affects its local environment.

Webster’s (2002, 338-343) second factor is warfare and competition. Evidence for the role of warfare in the Lowland Maya area has increased dramatically and displaced the once widely accepted notion of the peaceful Maya and warfare probably played an important role in the collapse of classic Maya polities (Webster 2000, 112). Warrior ideology was central to royal ideology and more Maya fortifications are known than for Central Mexico, an area often considered ‘warlike’ (Webster 2002, 167, 224-228). Details of particular campaigns and the political events that they were embedded in are revealing, particularly about dynastic and inter-site relations and how these could cause instability and promote endemic warfare and collapse. Warfare seems to have provided political and economic benefits for rulers and to have concerned control over territory as well as more directly expressed elite concerns for tribute and elite prisoners. It is also possible, depending on the agricultural situation that demands for foodstuffs were made between groups and this may have been a cause of warfare (Webster 2002, 341-342). The political landscape of the Late Classic Maya was thus extremely fragmented, made up of polities of varying sizes and influence. This fragmentation, and the often-violent rivalries that resulted, may have contributed to restrictions in land use in border or disputed areas, disrupting agriculture and exacerbating population pressure in other areas.

The third factor that Webster (2002, 343-347) cites is the failure of kingship. Like Lucero (2002), Webster notes the importance of the ritual role of rulers in maintaining ‘balance, order, and success in all those aspects of life that affected his people, most importantly food production.’ Such an ideology results in the cultural response of ‘who’ not ‘what’ is to blame (Webster 2002, 345). This is most clearly demonstrated at Copan, where royal ideology and kingship ceased, but noble families survived for a considerable time, some up to 200 years (Webster 2002, 311, 345). In northern Maya areas kingship continued, although the style and ideology of kingship was significantly different from that of Classic Maya (Webster 2002, 346). Webster (2000, 112) has associated the failure of classic kingship with increased warfare in the late Classic period.

Webster successfully uses case-studies of individual sites to show different patterns of collapse at different sites and regions and with a range of causes and eschews a mono-causal and monolithic approach. Furthermore, he and Lucero convincingly show how problems could have had socio-political consequences, in particular on elite ideology, and take into account the variety of evidence, rightly suggesting that environmental factors may have been important in some instances but were not the exclusive or universal causes of collapse.

Conclusions
It is evident that collapse theories have undergone significant shifts, not least in the admission of the complexity of the problem. It is possible to identify some current trends. Monocausal explanations and explanations that fail to take account of individual and group agency are no longer widely accepted and there has been a failure
to produce meaningful generally applicable explanatory models, as opposed to models which describe the effects of collapse. Gill (2000) is a notable exception to this trend in proposing a monocausal exogenous reason for the collapse of the Classic Maya, but his conclusions and the evidence on which they are based are widely disputed. While Tainter’s work of 1988 remains widely cited, specialists have been largely critical of its specific conclusions, and this may be due to the attempt to create an all-embracing collapse hypothesis.

That collapses share common traits is not surprising since they involve the fracturing of certain established socio-political and economic relationships, which may lead to the formation of new identities and relationships. It is likely enough that similar kinds of changes may be found in the material record of collapsed societies. Even so, some continuity may often be apparent, particularly amongst the population at large and more locally based elites, and this may be based on preexisting social relationships.

Most pervasive in recent approaches to collapse is the rise of environmental considerations, especially climate change, whether natural or anthropogenic, although it has a long history in certain fields, particularly in Maya and even Mycenaean studies. A recent article even seeks to show that abrupt natural climatic events were the major cause of societal collapse in general, suggesting that only in the present and future will anthropogenic climate change come into play (Weiss and Bradley 2001). This may be the current fashion, as Webster (2002, 239) notes, owing to an increase in palaeoclimatological data and a current global focus on climate and environment abuse, although Diamond (2005), who sought, and failed, to demonstrate a strong link between collapse and the environment, admitted the importance of other factors. Barbarians also continue to play a role in collapse, but this is now seen as a more complex process of interaction between different groups at different levels in society. They are also seen as specific to particular collapses, rather than universal to all. Many scholars rightly focus on human systems, as well as responses to pressures environmental and otherwise.

Yoffee (2006) stressed the importance of appreciating the fluidity of identity and maintaining a successful balance in societies between centre and periphery. He demystifies collapse and sets it firmly in the context of social change and group interaction. Such themes were discussed successfully by Heather (1995; 2005) and Webster (2002). Heather (1995) noted the presence of new powerful groups within the Western Roman Empire, which led to new responses and behaviours amongst local elites, thus collapsing the centralised imperial system. Webster (2002) pointed to the failure of kingship and the social responses to that, which resulted in new political realities and ideologies. These are the kind of features of collapse and continuity identified by Eisenstadt (1988). Heather (1995; 2005) Webster (2002) and Yoffee (2006) offer multi-causal and integrative theories and explanations of collapse which rely on the interrelation of specific factors including individual and group motivations and the competition and tensions inherent in maintaining a particular system.

Another important conclusion that can be reached concerns the time span in which collapses occur. Heather (1995) notes that the processes of the collapse of the Western Roman Empire took over a century to play out, while Webster (2002) sees the Maya collapse as a drawn out and varied process taking place over some two centuries, though more rapidly in specific regions or at individual sites. This inevitably suggests the awkward conclusion that collapse is often a process, something criticised by Bowersock (1991). While this may be conceptually difficult, we must remember that societies are not monolithic or static entities, but comprise many dynamic groups and tensions. Instances of collapse are both events and parts of processes, since their effects cannot be separated from the societies they are embedded in. This exposes the difficulty in terminology noted by Cowgill (1988) and suggests that the (‘negative’) process of collapse, or political fragmentation, must be seen within a context that admits (‘positive’) change and transformation. While Ward-Perkins (2005) criticised the overly positive spin placed on the fall of the Western Roman Empire and successfully demonstrated that a much poorer material world followed, both he and Heather (1995, 38) note that this political fragmentation must be seen within such a context of transformation.

Many of the themes and issues raised in this chapter will be taken up in chapter 3, which will discuss and analyse theories of the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial societies, and chapter 4, where the Hittite, Maya and Roman societies will be used to offer analogies for processes at work in the Mycenaean collapse. It will be seen that similar problems of the interpretation of collapse confront Aegean archaeologists.

14 Aimers recently (2007) pointed to a consensus that rejects the idea of a Maya collapse due to the lengths of time involved and the differences in identifiable changes across the lowland Maya region.
3. THEORIES OF MYCENAEAN COLLAPSE

Introduction

Schliemann’s description (1880, 56-57) of the history of Mycenae suggests some continuity between the Mycenae of Agamemnon and the classical polis that sent 80 men to Thermopylae and, with Tiryns, 400 to Platea, before the population was dispersed by the Argives in 468BC. In archaeological terms, he argued that the ‘Agora’, the area now known as Grave Circle A, was kept clear until 468BC and that debris only started accumulating in it after this date (Schliemann 1880, 341). However, he also followed Pausanias and Strabo in observing a decline in the fortunes of Mycenae after the death of Agamemnon, suggesting that only ‘a fearful political revolution and catastrophe can have prevented Orestes from becoming king’ (Schliemann 1880, 56). According to Pausanias, the causes of this could have been the Dorian invasion or, Strabo, the return of the Heraclidae. Schliemann (1880, 343-344) later emphasised his belief that the presence of royalty at Mycenae ceased at the Dorian invasion, which he suggested happened much earlier than its traditional date of 1104BC.

In this early interpretation of the history of LBA Mycenae, Schliemann attempted to combine the varied Greek traditions, from Homer to later classical travel writers, in which he placed great faith (Schliemann 1880, 334ff.), with archaeological evidence, to produce a meaningful narrative. Thus a picture of continuity and change was established. Such attempts to combine the different categories of evidence have continued to this day, although, as it will be argued, they may, for several reasons, have proved misleading.

As work continued revealing the Mycenaean culture of LBA Greece, it became clear that significant changes occurred in its later stages, indicated by a seemingly simultaneous series of destructions at major sites. In the 1890s, Tsountas (quoted in McDonald 1967, 106-107) could write:

The palaces… were destroyed by fire after being so thoroughly pillaged that scarcely a single bit of metal was left in the ruins. Further… they were never rebuilt;... How are we to account for this sudden and final overthrow otherwise than by assuming a great historic crisis, which left these mighty cities with their magnificent palaces only heaps of smoking ruins? And what other crisis can this have been than the irruption of the Dorians? And their descent into the Peloponnese is traditionally dated at the very time which other considerations have led us to fix as the lower limit of the Mycenaean age. Had that migration never been recorded by the ancients nor attested by the state of the Peloponnesian in historic times [generally an area of Doric dialect], we should still be led to infer it from the facts now put in evidence by the archaeologist’s spade.

For Tsountas, Mycenaean influence continued in some ways, although the coming of the Dorians ‘marks the beginning of a long dark ages,’ from some time in the twelfth century (quoted in McDonald 1967, 108, 208, 209). Petrie’s work in Egypt synchronised the destruction of the Greek palaces with the Nineteenth dynasty, and provided a date of around 1200, with a subsequent ‘Dark Age’ lasting until around 700 (Morris 1997, 97). This basic interpretation has in one form or another remained a commonplace of Mycenaean and Greek archaeology to the present day and forms an omnipresent backdrop to all theories of Mycenaean collapse (McDonald 1967, 407-417; Eder 1998).

The series of destructions and abandonments around 1200BC, already noted by Tsountas but now including sites discovered subsequently, mark what has been labelled the ‘Catastrophe’ (Drews 1993, 4) or most recently the ‘Collapse’ (Dickinson 2006a, 24). Destructions at major sites were accompanied by the loss of the limited literacy that was a feature of the palatial bureaucracies, which had formed the ‘organizing centres of this civilization’ (Dickinson in Hornblower and Spawforth 1996, 1014), and other palatial features including the distinct architectural form of the palaces themselves and the frescoes that decorated them (Sherratt 2001, 214-215). Skills in creating jewellery, seal engraving and ivory carving, as well as the production of glass and faience objects seem also to have been lost (Deger-Jalkotzy 1998a, 122). These are taken to indicate the collapse of the palatial system.

Nevertheless, it has become increasingly clear that despite these losses, there was no immediate ‘dark age’ and the culture that followed the collapse remained Mycenaean (Morris 1997; Rutter 1992, 70; Dickinson 2006b, 116; Thomatos 2006). Twelfth century Mycenaean society, though, was fundamentally different in many ways. Primarily, it lacked the degree of social complexity that the palaces had represented in some areas, although there was much variation in developmental complexity throughout the Mycenaean culture zone (Wright 2008; Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008; Dickinson 1994, 78; Deger-Jalkotzy 1996, 726-727) as well as in Mycenaean material culture (Rutter 1992; Dickinson 2006b, 115) during the palatial era. The clearly elite palaces, their organisation and structure, their ability to mobilise and command resources for large and impressive architectural works, and their influence over wide regions, had no comparable twelfth century successors. Other areas, however, did not have these systems to lose.

Quite what the collapse meant for those who experienced it is difficult to grasp – the texts that Ward-Perkins (2005) can draw upon to illustrate the terror caused by barbarian invasions and their effects for inhabitants of the Roman empire simply do not exist. A variety of perspectives is possible and much depends on the chosen context, for when considering such matters it must be remembered...
that individual responses to events may have varied widely and any modern characterisation of the period is subjective and partial. Much of course depends on the theory of collapse that is supported; social, physical and psychological responses to catastrophic environmental phenomena may have differed significantly from responses to invasion or internecine warfare; differing understandings of the society that collapsed also influence interpretation. Although difficult to avoid, it must be borne in mind that modern historical characterisations are limited, subjective and potentially misleading.

Despite these problems, some scholars have ventured to make bold assertions about the collapse. Drews (1993, 3) maintains a strongly negative view of collapse in the Aegean and around the eastern Mediterranean, suggesting that, it:

> was one of history’s most frightful turning points. For those who experienced it, it was a calamity… the twelfth century ushered in a dark age, which in Greece and Anatolia was not to lift for more than four hundred years… Altogether the end of the Bronze Age was arguably the worst disaster in ancient history, even more calamitous than the collapse of the Western Roman Empire.

Others, for example Muhly (1992, 70) and Deger-Jalkotzy (1996, 728), have seen the collapse in a more positive light, and their views are more politicised. For them, the collapse removed what they characterise as a heavy-handed and stifling palatial bureaucracy, allowing increased freedom and opportunity eventually to flourish. Others note that it at least enabled different areas to prosper (Sherratt 2001, 234-235).

Rutter (1992, 70) states ‘despite some major shifts in how people were distributed in the landscape and what was probably a substantial decline in the overall population, the Aegean world weathered the actual palatial collapse of ca.1200BC well enough’ and Thomatos (2006) has recently demonstrated this for the LHIIIIC period, although it has been noted that perhaps the significance of these shifts for people can be underemphasised. Although positive aspects can be found, the negative aspects of such a disruption should not be underestimated, for the destructions and abandonments represent events that were experienced by people and surely represent death, violence and dislocation.

Of course, the years before c.1200 may also have been difficult, depending on the specific causes of collapse. It is notable that while LHIIIIC Middle is now seen as highpoint of postpalatial Mycenaean culture (Thomatos 2006), LHIIIIC Early may have been a more troubled and unstable time, while attempts at recovery and continued destructions and abandonments throughout the 12th century are thought to mark it generally as a less stable and perhaps more militaristic period than before (Dickinson 2006a, 58-61, 69-72). It is likely that in some areas the significant destructions, movement of population away from previously occupied sites and changes in the structures and traditions of life resulted in negative psychological effects, which may have been exacerbated by living in the ruins of largely abandoned and run-down areas (Dickinson 2006a, 66, 72). However, French (forthcoming) has recently commented that the reconstruction and occupation period of new complexes overlying the destruction horizon at Mycenae ‘may have lasted some time.’ Nevertheless, it is highly significant that the palace system that had operated for perhaps two centuries was not reconstructed, even in LHIIIIC Middle, and Deger-Jalkotzy (1998a, 122) states that ‘the Mycenaeans of LHIIIIC were either not able or not willing to uphold the high cultural achievements of the preceding periods.’

The purpose of this chapter is to review the main theories developed to account for the collapse itself. Several syntheses dealing with these exist, notably Drews (1993, 33-93), Rutter (2000b) Shelmerdine (2001a, 374-376) and Dickinson (2006a, 43-57), but all support different reasons and differ in their final conclusions. Drews (1993, 97-225) sees changes in warfare as responsible, Rutter (1975; 1990) argues for invaders from outside the Aegean, Shelmerdine (2001a, 376) favours systems collapse, while Dickinson (2006a, 54-56) notes a variety of likely factors that may have acted in combination.

Explanations should seek to deal with several key questions that determine the nature of the collapse itself, primarily the cause of the destructions and abandonments, and why the palaces were not rebuilt and the system they represented came to an end while much of Mycenaean culture continued (Shelmerdine 2001a, 376). The theories will be dealt with thematically here, since many authors have taken similar approaches, but even so these divisions are broad, since many explanations include reference to more than one factor and it is considered unlikely that one single factor was to blame. A degree of overlap is thus inevitable.

**Economic explanations**

Economic arguments for the collapse of palatial society have been and remain popular. A variety of approaches have been adopted and two main styles of argument appear. The first strand is based on external trade factors, the second on the internal organisational style of palace states themselves. To both these approaches other factors are usually added, such as the actions of particular groups, the climate or the occurrence of natural disasters. Often with these additions, an economic argument is extended into a hypothesis of system collapse, where problems in one part of society affect the whole, so this will merit discussion here. It may be noted initially that these approaches suggest that scholars hold quite different views of the palace societies themselves and their success, which inevitably affects any conclusions they make concerning the collapse. There is also a danger in arguing backwards from the collapse to suggest that it
was somehow inevitable or probable, and fitting the rather limited available evidence into such a model.

Vermeule (1960b) argued that the Aegean trade was disrupted in the late 13th century by the incoming ‘Sea Peoples’ and that this disruption, more than any invasion or migration, was responsible for the collapse. However, this assumes that the palaces were reliant on international trade for their survival and that such a disruption occurred. While the palaces may indeed have relied on controlling access to prestige items from overseas to reinforce their own position in prestige exchange networks, it is far from certain that the ‘Sea Peoples’ of the Egyptian texts were active in the Aegean and Ionian seas. The Aegean islands would arguably have been most vulnerable, but they do not provide the evidence of disruption that could be expected in such a scenario (Vlachopoulos 1998; see chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of the Sea Peoples and the Aegean islands). It is often argued that there was an Aegean component to the Sea Peoples, in which case the scenario would be islanders disrupting trade for the mainland. But often the increased mobility, which is often suggested for post-collapse Greece is couched in terms of refugees from palace states, and if so would be more a consequence of collapse than its cause (Sandars 1978, 200-201).

Furthermore, it is unclear in these circumstances why the palaces and the palatial system could not survive or recover, unless the disruption to trade was severe and long-lasting. While it is fair to imagine some battles could have been lost, elites were not above leaving their capitals and maintaining themselves elsewhere until it was safe to return, as the Hittite kings did (see chapter 4). Unless we imagine total annihilation, it is hard to credit this view. Indeed, we need to consider disruption to trade involved raiding on palace and other centres, or disruption to shipping lanes and ports, or a combination. Although the Sea Peoples are often characterised as ‘aggressive, well-armed, efficient and ruthless raiders’ (Popham 1994, 228), this owes more to the development of historical factoids about them than the limited evidence itself. This traditional view of the Sea Peoples, their origins and role in the Aegean, based on difficult and often highly circumstantial evidence is highly questionable (Dickinson 2006a, 47).

Even if we accept the existence of piracy and raiding, neither of which are implausible, it has been noted that ‘land-raiders and pirates in the Aegean and elsewhere have historically tended to operate in relatively small groups, whose basic tactic would be fast sweeps to gather up what could easily be taken, whether human captives, livestock or portable loot’ (Dickinson 2006a, 48). Palaces would have been capable of mounting some defence, and naval arrangements of some kind at Pylos are hypothesised from the Linear B tablets, but would be expected anyway, and even the reference to enemy ships causing great destruction at Ugarit show that this happened because Ugarit’s ships and military were in fact absent (Bryce 1998, 367). If one or other of the mainland palaces exercised some control or influence over islands such as Rhodes, as some believe, then this also implies that at least minimal forces existed to offer some resistance. It is questionable then to what extent such groups could have systematically disrupted trade to the extent that palace societies would have been unable to function. Even though the literary evidence highlights the existence of such groups at particular times and places, it might be expected that they were a normal and ever present feature, and in fact they would have been able to make a better living when trade was good.

It seems unlikely that there was any unusual large-scale sea borne disruption within the Aegean, although Amarna Letter 38 shows that elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean there was sea borne raiding in the LBA (Moran 1992, 111; Bryce 1998, 56 and n.24). Iakovides (cited in Rutter 2000b) acknowledged this and argued that it was this disruption of trade in the eastern Mediterranean that was responsible for the collapse of the palaces. If it is accepted that Ahhiyawa was a Mycenaean kingdom, then there is some indication that the Hittites in fact tried to ban trade between a part of Mycenaean Greece and Assyria at some time towards the end of the thirteenth century (Bryce 1998, 343). Depending on the interpretation of this, and if such a ban were successful, it need not have affected the whole of Mycenaean Greece, nor trade that was in the hands of intermediaries. Indeed, many argue that the Mycenaeans themselves did not play a significant role in international trade, much of which may have been in the hands of Cypriots (Sherratt 2001, 222-224).

Sherratt (2001; 2003) has recently made a similar case to Vermeule, though differing importantly in detail. She too suggests that palaces were dependent on international trade and their involvement in trade routes for their survival (Sherratt 2001, 226-227). Unlike Vermeule, however, she suggests that shifting trade routes brought about the demise of palaces. She argues that in LHIIIIB Cypriot ships began to operate around the Greek mainland and into the central Mediterranean, and notes that Pylos may have been being actively bypassed in LHIIIIB, seeking to retain its involvement in trade routes by extending its control over the further Province at that time (Sherratt 2001, 232-234). Smaller ships may have cut through the more established trade routes and created new non-palace focussed markets and mechanisms, all of which may ‘have increased the edginess of the palatial authorities in general’ (Sherratt 2001, 234). To this may be added an increasing tendency for import substitution: the local production of Mycenaean inspired pottery in Italy, as well as possibly Aegean inspired shifts in agricultural practices, Cyprus and the Levant, as well as oil and textile production on Cyprus from LCIIC (Sherratt 2001, 237; 2003, 40). In this scenario, ‘the palaces (even those favourably placed in relation to continuing long-distance routes) simply became irrelevant… they disappeared – or at least were forced to abandon their palatial facades and join the rest of the post-palatial world’ (Sherratt 2001, 237). Recently Mee
(2008, 382) speculated as to whether a breakdown in state-controlled trade networks could have caused political collapse, as may have occurred in the parts of the Near East. Though the issue of state control is arguable, the existence and potential fragility of trade networks is not in question.

A further aspect of this argument is concerned with the use of bronze and iron, and the continuation of interregional trade into postpalatial times. It has been thought that increased iron use may have been stimulated by shortages of bronze or tin (Sherratt 2003, 39). However, Sherratt (2003, 41-42) argues that in fact not only was there much more bronze in circulation from the thirteenth century, but also that it ‘was circulating more widely, reaching social groups whose access to it had previously been restricted or relatively tightly controlled.’ This devaluing of bronze may have stimulated the use of iron as an expensive and rare prestige substance for producing items and shapes that were already produced in bronze (Sherratt 2003, 43-44). Furthermore, it seems that international trade did not stop around c.1200 but continued into the twelfth century and beyond with Cyprus playing an important role linking Greece and the eastern and central Mediterranean (Sherratt 2003, 51; Crielaard 1998).

These changes in the availability and circulation of materials and goods would have had social consequences over the short and longer term, affecting both palatial and non-palatial areas. In fact, Sherratt (2003, 43) sees this reflected in the settlement patterns of parts of Greece, in particular the Argolic, Euboean, Saronic and Corinthian gulfs, which often have eastern connections reflected in material culture. Crielaard (1998, 198-199) sees this long-distance trade as small scale and loosely dominated by local elites in a world of socio-political fragmentation, which may fit the scenario for the styles of postpalatial rulership and society (discussed in chapter 6).

While some aspects of Sherratt’s argument on the nature of the palace societies, particularly in regard to their militarism, lack of ‘depth’ and development over time and aterritorial nature have been questioned (Dickinson 2006a, 36), the model of change she presents is appealing in accounting for palatial redundancy, with populations believing that ‘they could do better without them’ because they were offered new opportunities stemming from a wider access to goods and ideas (Sherratt 2001, 238). It is attractive to see the changes marked by the collapse as part of longer term processes which could have caused social changes that palace societies were unable to adapt to or control.

Nevertheless, there are problems with this model; in particular it fails to explain the destructions and abandonments themselves, which feature as the violent and visible indicators of palatial collapse. Rutter’s comments (2000b) on Vermeule (1960b), that the theory ‘is a better response to the question of why the palaces were not rebuilt than it is to that of who destroyed them and why’, also hold good for Sherratt’s hypothesis. However, perhaps in this view, the actual destroyers and destructions, which could have happened over some thirty years and for various localised and specific reasons, are less important than the failure to rebuild to particular plans in particular locations. This failure may represent the ideological or practical redundancy of the system itself, which, after being unable to maintain itself, perhaps could not be completely or even partially reconstructed.

It is plausible too that in such a scenario palaces came into more direct or more serious competition with each other, in an attempt to assert their authority and control access to goods. These conflicts may have been violent and destructive. However, if trade routes were shifting northwards, and some palaces remained favourably placed, as Sherratt (2001, 237) admits, it is unclear why they failed to do better rather than worse than before and why these palaces were destroyed and not rebuilt. Tiryns, for example, appears to do better after the destruction c.1200, expanding in LHIIIC, but it is no longer palatial. Dimini, on the other hand, was destroyed in LHIIIB2 and abandoned early in LHIIIC, in favour of Volos (Adrimi-Sismani 2006). It is unclear why the palace authorities in these places should have fared worse because of a northern shift of trade routes. Furthermore, if, as Sherratt (2001, 234) argues the collapse of the palaces was merely a ‘cardboard collapse’ why does Messenia, in her words, take ‘on the general appearance of an underpopulated backwater’?

In Sherratt’s model, it is possible to see the Eastern and Central Mediterranean as a region of potential entrepreneurial opportunity, and the palaces, shippers and middlemen as competitive companies or businesspeople, vying for the trade essential to the maintenance of their lifestyles, and it is indeed, as she admits, a model appropriate to contemporary concerns (Sherratt 2003, 53). The palaces, and those who ran them, are presented as rather inept businesspeople, who failed to comprehend the complexities of the palatial system, with its administrative habit, which they ‘clumsily grafted’ onto a client-based warrior society (Sherratt 2001, 238). While this view underestimates the capacity for cultural and intellectual development over some 150-200 years of the palaces’ existence (Dickinson 2006a, 35-36), it may be right to suggest that in fact, to continue the analogy, the wanaktes and their fellows were bad businessmen, or were in fact largely disinterested in any business beyond simply producing something to exchange for the goods they desired.

For example, many have argued or assumed that the palaces directly exerted great control and influence over the lives of their subjects and the economies of their territories (e.g. Betancourt 2000), but there are considerable problems with this view, and it is now usually rejected (Dickinson 2006a, 36-41; Shelmerdine and Bennet 2008). There is no evidence to suggest that palaces acted as a ‘central clearing house for all goods
and commodities manufactured in its territory”; pottery production may not have been directly controlled by palaces and bronzesmiths may have been independent, while agriculture seems to have remained largely unspecialised (Dickinson 2006a, 37). The palaces may have been ‘in large part dependent on the contingencies and activities of a surrounding world over which, fundamentally, they had little real control’ with international trade carried out at ‘arm’s length’ and with ‘little systematic interest in where… goods eventually go to, or who and where imported goods originally come from’ (Sherratt 2001, 215, 222, 224). If this is the case, the palaces, confronted with changing geo-economic realities, which they may not have clearly perceived, and a reduced market for their products, failed to react appropriately, failing to assert themselves in trading terms or to create new viable commodities.

These economic failures were compounded by political failures, specifically the failure to create and exploit a new viable ideology to maintain the prominence of the palatial elites. It is possible to extend this scenario to hypothesise one in which alternative value systems would be created, in order to replace the traditional palatial ideology with its reliance on some kind of external trade, and militarism could have been part of this. It is these values that may have undermined the palaces’ place in society and led ultimately to their physical destruction and that of the system they represented. In such explanations, economics alone is not enough to explain the collapse. However, economic changes would have had effects on other parts of society, and linking these factors can provide interesting scope for consideration.

The second kind of economics-based collapse theory emphasises internal, structural problems, which caused an inability to cope, rather than outside forces, although external forces do play a role in these arguments and one might argue that palaces reliant exclusively on overseas trade were also fundamentally flawed institutions in themselves. The influential view that the palaces were the all-powerful centres of a redistributive economy and social system, as mentioned above, goes back to Finley’s early analysis of the Linear B tablets, and was followed by Renfrew and others (De Fidio 2001, 15-16). Thus Betancourt (1976, 44) believed that ‘the Mycenaean economy seems to have been particularly subject to destruction’ because of overspecialisation, which meant that it ‘held the seeds of its own destruction.’ Similarly, Deger-Jalkotzy (1996, 716-718) has also argued for the extreme centralisation and specialisation of palace states and their inherent fragility. Betancourt suggested that this, in combination with an overlarge population led to an inability to cope with shocks, such as crop failures (Betancourt 1976, 44).

Some kind of regional agricultural disruption thus initiated a ‘systems collapse’, where problems in one part of the system affected the operation of the whole (Betancourt 2000, 301). The population, without guidance from ‘local, disorganised forces,’ would have been unable to cope, resulting in panic, flight and destruction (Betancourt 1976, 44-45). This was despite the fact that he suggested ‘the economic structure was directed and administered by the palaces which efficiently coordinated the whole system’ (Betancourt 1976, 45). Deger-Jalkotzy (1996, 717-718) further noted that palatial territories were too small to cope with expenditure, particularly in the form of monumental architecture and their ability to support and feed ‘the masses of dependent personnel’ while the ‘general population was suppressed and impoverished by overload of taxes and labour obligations.’

However, there is little to suggest that the population of LBA Greece was ever either burdensomely large or particularly impoverished, although population levels are difficult to estimate at any time. While Betancourt (1976, 42; 2000, 299) suggests a population estimate for Messenia of up to 100,000, many suggest a rather lower figure of up to 50,000 (e.g. Whitelaw 2001, 64), but even if a higher figure is adopted it is not clear that this would be beyond the carrying capacity for the land, especially if the population was at a similar level as in classical times (Betancourt 2000, 299). Rather than impoverishment, a spread of small, undefended sites might indicate ‘that a mild degree of prosperity was spread through much of Mycenaean society’ (Dickinson 2006a, 40).

It is likely enough that periodic droughts, other weather events and crop failures will have affected Greece from time to time, but one notable factor of classical famines and food shortages, and indeed modern ones, is not the lack of food itself but the failure to use available food to feed the worst affected. The effects of any suggested ‘regional disruption of agriculture’ would also depend on the degree of agricultural specialisation, which Betancourt (1976, 44) believes was extreme, and the extent of mutual support offered between palaces (Betancourt 2000, 299) but the evidence for this is extremely limited (Sherratt 2001, 218). Local specialisation seems to be a modern myth and the greater part of the economy, as represented by ordinary settlements, remained unspecialised with a range of crops and livestock (Dickinson 2006a, 37).

Similarly, since the gaps in what Linear B suggests about the economy and organisation have been more closely scrutinised in recent years (Halstead 1992, 1999a and 1999b), it seems most unlikely that the palace societies represented anything as oppressive, totalitarian and monolithic as suggested by Betancourt (1976; 2000) and Deger-Jalkotzy (1996). In fact, recent interpretations of the Pylos polity suggest that it was not at all state-like, but rather composed of competing lineage units, one of which managed to rise to a position of dominance but that failed in, or was not concerned with, forming an integrated state (Small 1998; 1999). It has even been argued that Mycenaean polities were not truly territorial states, in the wider sense, but were more interested in controlling trade routes (Sherratt 2001). Even if the palace states were territorial, and had far reaching
interests in small communities, the role of the palace need not have been negative or problematic. Palaima (2004a, 269-270) recently stated what is becoming increasingly recognised:

the influence of the palatial center would be felt by most inhabitants of the territory only intermittently and indirectly. Most inhabitants would be directly affected by clan chieftains, local big men (basileis in the plural), or even socially and economically prominent ‘aristocrats’ who occur in the tablets without any title, by personal name only.

In any case, the extreme view in which everything is controlled from the top down, and in which the population at large or even local authorities are unable to function at all without central direction, seems inherently unlikely and fails to credit individuals and groups outside the palace with any sense at all. Similarly, the notion that the palatial form of government, interpreted essentially as an ‘oriental’ and ‘despotic’ system, was ‘not a suitable kind of government for Greeks’ (Deger-Jalkotzy 1996, 728) is reminiscent of a rather romantic, old-fashioned kind of government for Greeks’ (Deger-Jalkotzy 1996, 25). Sandars (1978, 21-22) pointed out the ‘desperate poverty that prevails and the precariousness of life around these shores’ and characterised the Mediterranean coastline as subject to periodic drought and endemic want though while fluctuations in climate and rainfall and poor agricultural years may be constant dangers, a degree of stability and prosperity is nevertheless attested in the archaeological and historical records (Dickinson 1994, 29).

There is also a degree of local and regional variability due to the geographical features of Greece, which create a patchwork of microregions, including islands, mountains and plains. Sandars (1978, 21) notes that the plains experienced the danger of floods, which would have been increased by any significant deforestation. Nevertheless, the population of LBA Greece were not passive victims of their environment and at Tiryns and possibly on Rhodes measures for flood defences have been found (Maran 2006, 126; Deger-Jalkotzy 1998b, 120). Around Gla, major hydrological work was undertaken, presumably to increase agricultural land (Loader 1998, 101-109). These surely reflect a degree of understanding of local environmental processes and a capacity to deal with them through large-scale construction projects, although that capacity seems to have been lost in the collapse. Use and abandonment of exhausted land, which was then able to regenerate (Dickinson 1994, 25), may also be reflected in the occupation and abandonment of sites, with episodes of punctuated nucleation occurring. Such a settlement pattern may be difficult to detect archaeologically and this may affect interpretations of particular periods, such as the postpalatial period, where such trends could coincide with other evidence.

Drought and climate change
The drought collapse hypothesis was first cogently presented by Carpenter (1966) in acknowledgement of the lack of evidence for any migration into Greece c.1200 and the widespread abandonment of sites as opposed to their destruction (Drews 1993, 77). It became an influential view, particularly in English language scholarship, although it has not been as prominent elsewhere. In this view, around 1200, a megadrought affected the southern Peloponnese, Boeotia, Euboea, Phocis and the Argolid while other areas, Attica, the north-west Peloponnese, Thessaly and the Dodecanese escaped the worst. This was caused by a change in winter winds from wet north-easterly winds to drier westerly winds and Carpenter suggests that this pattern prevailed for some 300 years. This extended and severe drought inevitably caused crop failures and drove people to leave their homes and attack those places where grain could be stored, while later destructions could be explained by lightning strikes or accidents. A group of environmentalists and climatologists sought to demonstrate that such a pattern of drought was possible and suggested that Greece had in fact experienced similar conditions in winter 1954-1955, which could have lasted longer than one year (Bryson et al. 1974).

Critics of this view have suggested that the pattern of depopulation Carpenter suggested does not match what would be expected if his hypothesis was accurate (Desborough 1972, 22: Dickinson 1974). More recent research has also shown that many of the areas Carpenter thought experienced extreme depopulation may not have done so, and increased nucleation of population at particular sites is a valid alternative (Drews 1993, 80). Such may be the case in the Argolid (Drews 1993, 80), and the Euboean Gulf region (Crielaard 2006), while there is also continuity in Phocis (Mountjoy 1999, 745-746; Dickinson 2006a, 76, 179). Certainly the growth at Tiryns and renewed building at Korakou, Midea and Mycenae argues against the presence of any kind of serious agricultural or environmental problems hindering settlement (Dickinson 2006a, 60-61). Deger-Jalkotzy (1998a, 122) also notes that grain from
the LHIIIIC Argolid was larger and better quality than during palatial times.

Of all the regions of Greece, Messenia seems to have suffered the most significant levels of site abandonment and presumably depopulation, and a localised drought and famine could certainly have played a part in this. Against this, however, is that ‘the Linear B texts of Pylos give no clear hint that there is anything wrong in the agricultural system’ (Dickinson 2006a, 55). Rather, Drews (1993, 81) notes that quite adequate rations were being disbursed by the Pylos palace to its workers, while the flocks were also thriving. Another problem with Carpenter’s hypothesis is that it fails to explain the destructions of sites in the north-west Peloponnese, such as Teikhos Dymaion and in Thessaly at Dimini and Pefkakia, outside the area of his drought. The prolonged nature of this drought scenario also obscures the postpalatial recovery and flourishing now evident in LHIIIIC Middle (Desborough 1964; Rutter 1992; Thomatos 2006).

Another problem has been in securing positive evidence for the drought hypothesis (Dickinson 2006a, 55). Various studies have shown conflicting results (Drews 1993, 78). Tree rings in California, falling water levels in Swiss lakes and the behaviour of Himalayan glaciers have been interpreted as showing that there was a hotter drier phase throughout the northern hemisphere from 1400-900 while others have suggested a peak of dryness around 1500 followed by a colder and wetter spell and a little ice age beginning c.1200. As Drews (1993, 79) rightly notes, ‘the geographical and chronological frames of reference are here so vast that they do not help very much.’ Given the regional variations possible just within Greece itself this is certainly the case, and, even if any of the suggested climate scenarios is generally correct, it is unclear what significance it would have given the more positive picture of postpalatial Greece now held.

There is some evidence for drought from elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean although how this may relate to particular regions of Greece is unclear. There may have been an episode of drought in west central Anatolia, as indicated by tree rings from Gordion dated to around 1200 (Drews 1993, 79). This site is some distance from Greece and its location on the inland Anatolian plateau gives it a somewhat different, non-Mediterranean climate (Macqueen 1986, 11; Bienkowski and Millard 2000, 18, 230-231). Even if there was a drought here around 1200 there is no certainty that Greece would have been affected.

Other evidence suggests that the Hittite homeland may have experienced drought, or at least that for some reason it may have come to rely on imported grain from Egypt and Canaan from the mid-13th century, although the precise nature of and reasons for this arrangement are not known (Bryce 1998, 356-357, 364-365). Libya too may have suffered from food shortages perhaps due to drought towards the end of the 13th century, as the Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah could be taken to imply. However, this inscription emphasises the wealth and fertility of Egypt, giving this as a reason for the Libyan attack, as well as noting the shipment of grain to the Hittites ‘to keep that land alive’, and this contrast between the wealth of Egypt and the poverty of its enemies is surely not accidental (Drews 1993, 79).

Nevertheless, Hittite texts do suggest that arrangements for grain shipments were made at a high level and involved the presence of a Hittite prince (Bryce 1998, 357).

Climate change, rather than episodic drought, has also been blamed for the collapse in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean (Weiss 1982; Neumann 1993). Weiss (1982) followed Carpenter (1966) and Bryson et al. (1974) and suggested that drought caused the collapse and widespread population movements, and he even extends this to Anatolia, where he associated it with the Sea Peoples’ invasion of Egypt. Neumann’s (1993, 231), on the other hand, suggested that increased rainfall in central Europe caused more frequent crop failures and that these initiated ‘major and violent migrations’ from Hungary and central Europe towards the south and south-east as far as the Nile Delta. These migrants, he suggested, could be linked with the destruction of the Mycenaean centres. However, Neumann’s (1993, 241-243) acceptance of the veracity of an ‘age of ‘great migration” relies on older archaeological works in which mass migration as an explanation of archaeological change was more unquestioningly accepted than it is today. Indeed, the historical reality of any ‘migration of the sea peoples’ must now be seriously doubted (Drews 2000). Migration is discussed in more detail below.

Although the drought hypothesis as a cause of LBA collapse has been extended from Greece to the entire Eastern Mediterranean, its application on such a wide scale seems problematic in that regional variations are not sufficiently dealt with and there is a lack of positive evidence for drought in Greece. Both older and more recent studies have yet to find any positive evidence of megadrought, although it is generally accepted that drought may have played some role (Wright 1968; Shrimpton 1987). There may be some evidence for food shortages in some parts of the wider eastern Mediterranean, although no cause is stated in the relevant texts and drought is only one possibility; labour shortages or too much rain could have had much the same effect in disrupting agriculture, as could internecine warfare (Bryce 1998, 357). Models that rely on mass migration are unreliable and there is no evidence for mass migration into Greece around 1200, whatever climatic changes may have occurred in other regions (see below). Drews (1993, 82-83) has also dismissed the notion that a starving, and in his view unarmed, populace could have caused the destructions of major centres, noting that there are no examples of this in modern or ancient times. More plausible is the idea that general unrest and disorder stemming from shortages could have disrupted the functioning of society (Dickinson 2006a, 55). Overall, the drought hypothesis for Greece is unconvincing on a
Earthquakes are normal features of life in Greece, lying as it does in an area of high seismicity (Nur and Cline 2000, 45). Papadopoulos (1996, 205) has argued that there is a high probability, based on observations of 20th century seismic data, that destructive shocks may be expected to occur at one or more sites approximately every thirty years, although Stiros (1996, 133) observes that earthquake intensity can be considerably different at nearby sites, and depends on local conditions. Given that more has become known about postpalatial Greece, with continued habitation now known at many sites notably in the Argolid at Tiryns, it is not surprising that earthquakes, as destruction ‘events’, have become a popular explanation for destructions at particular sites, regions and also for the collapse itself both in Greece and more widely in the eastern Mediterranean (e.g. Papadopoulos 1996; c.f. Drews 1993, 33). Drews (1993, 44) notes that the earthquake hypothesis fits the changing view of LHIIIC in that continued habitation contradicts a drought hypothesis, and also makes any destructive invasion seem less likely.

Stiros (1996, 129) notes that earthquakes have been used by archaeologists as a deus ex machina for explaining destructions and abandonments but has nevertheless presented some criteria by which they can be identified and differentiated from other natural or anthropogenic causes. These criteria, relevant to the following discussion, are as follows (Stiros 1996, 152):

1. Ancient constructions offset by seismic faults.
2. Skeletons of people killed and buried under the debris of fallen buildings.
3. Certain abrupt geomorphological changes, occasionally associated with destructions and/or abandonment of buildings and sites.
4. Characteristic structural damage and failure of constructions.
5. Destruction and quick reconstruction of sites, with the introduction of what can be regarded as ‘anti-seismic’ building construction techniques, but with no change in their overall cultural character.
7. Damage or destruction of isolated buildings or whole sites, for which an earthquake appears the only reasonable explanation.

As can be seen from the data summarised in Table 3.1, there is positive evidence of earthquakes at Mycenae, however, the strongest evidence of this is from the middle of LHIIIB rather than later. Nevertheless, a major earthquake has been proposed as the explanation for the destruction c.1200. Iakovides (1977, 134) proposed that a violent earthquake, for which he saw ‘firm, incontrovertible excavation evidence,’ was responsible for the destruction at Mycenae at the end of LHIIIB, although this did not disrupt the evolution of its Mycenaean culture, which continued. French (1998, 4) notes a ‘massive conflagration that so covered areas of the site that the debris was not removed’ and suggested that this marked the end of the palatial administration, although admitting that some areas produce no such evidence of burning. Nevertheless, following Kilian’s (1980; 1996) attribution of destructions at Tiryns and Mycenae to earthquake, French (1998, 4) suggested that ‘it seems probable that this destruction too is the result of earthquake.’ In a later statement French (2002, 135) seems more cautious, stating that the major fire destructions throughout much but not all of the Citadel at the end of the palatial period ‘may be the result of an earthquake’ though ‘at other centres there seems to be more evidence of earthquakes.’ The devastation was notable in the Citadel House Area, where nonetheless debris was cleared into terraces and some surviving wall
Several earthquakes have been suggested as causing destructions at Thebes. An early earthquake in LHIII A2 has been proposed and one in later LHIII B1 followed by a prolonged fire (Nur and Cline 2000, 54). Perhaps the best evidence, from a palatial workshop on the Kadmeia, is the skeleton of a young woman who appears to have been killed by a sharp blow to the head, which, in the context of her discovery within a destruction layer characterised by fallen debris from the walls, is thought to have been from a fallen roof beam (Sampson 1996, 114). It seems that she may have been trapped on the first floor of a two-storey building, since her remains were some distance above the floor level.

**The Menelaion**

The discovery of a skeleton in the collapsed monumental terrace wall of LHIII B2, indicates a sudden and unexpected destruction, which could have been an earthquake (Nur and Cline 2000, 55). Another building on the lower terrace was damaged possibly at the same time.

**Pyllos**

Kilian (1996, 65) notes that 'walls deviating from a straight line have been excavated in the Palace of Pyllos, while in the main workshop (NE building) of the same complex the corners of the foundations had opened by about 1.4m.' He suggested that these were clear indications of earthquake.

**Kynos: Livanates**

At Kynos: Livanates there are storerooms of an LHIII C complex, which reveal at least two destruction episodes thought to have been caused by earthquake (Dakoronia 1996). The LHIII C complex overlies LHIIIB architectural remains, and these earlier buildings may also have been destroyed by an earthquake with fire; skeletons were also found buried under stones but it is unclear from the report which destructions they were associated with (AR 44 (1998), 73). The earlier LHIII C destruction seems to belong to the end of LHIII C Early, indicated by sherds found around clay storage bins (Dakoronia 1996, 41). The mudbrick walls shifted from their stone foundations while mudbricks were dislocated and some fell into the clay bins. This may indicate 'a high acceleration event, probably an earthquake' rather than deliberate destruction or weakness of construction (Dakoronia 1996, 41). The building was subsequently repaired and continued in use. A second destruction with structural deformation accompanied by fire, less than 100 years later may also have been due to earthquake (Dakoronia 1996, 42). This is suggested by the a spread of LHIII C Advanced/Late pottery fragments together with pebbles and rounded marine fossils all over the site, which may have been swept over the site by a tsunami following an earthquake (Dakoronia 1996, 42). These are not uncommon in the area. Even so, the building was again repaired and continued in use into Submycenaean, and Dakoronia (1996, 42-44) concludes that although frequent in East
Locris and destructive, earthquakes ‘were not critical events for its settlement history from Mycenaean times onwards.’

Other sites
According to Nur and Cline (2000, 56), earthquakes have also been suggested during c.1225-1175 for Lefkandia, Korakou, Gla, Nichoria, Kriss (Phoci) and Kastanas (Thessaaly), although the evidence is inconclusive. The destruction of Gla is thought to have taken place sometime in the second half of the thirteenth century (Iakovides 1983, 105; 1990, 610; Shelmerdine 2001a, 372).

Discussion
Clearly it has become acceptable to attribute destruction events to earthquakes, and this is only right given the known seismological character of Greece (Shelmerdine 2001a, 381). Nevertheless, while destructions and abandonments themselves may be attributable to earthquakes, and though many of them fit the criteria outlined by Stiros (1996) it does remain difficult to be certain of this, whether the wider social and political effects of the collapse can be explained by them, as suggested by Killian (1988a; 1996) and Papadopoulos (1996), has been doubted. Stiros (1996, 143) notes the potentially catastrophic results an earthquake could have had on the existence of the Spartan state in 464. In that case, it was linked with a slave revolt and affected the internal situation and external relations (Powell 1988, 109-110), which suggests that earthquakes at particular times could exacerbate an already difficult situation or even cause one; but this must depend on individual circumstances. No similar helot class seems to have existed in Mycenaean Greece, so it is doubtful that it experienced the same threat of social upheaval, although difficulties could have been caused. Ambraseys (1996, 32) warns of creating ‘catastrophe theories’ by associating what seem to be simultaneous earthquakes which occurred at some distance from each other, for example in the Argolid and Pylos, and even associating geographically close destructions to single earthquakes is problematic since damage may differ significantly due to local geological conditions, the alignment of buildings and so on.

Shelmerdine (2001a, 375) rightly asks why it was at this point that the megarons of Mycenae and Tiryyns were not rebuilt and why palatial administration collapsed c.1200 rather than after the earthquakes at the end of LHIIIIB1. French (2002, 135) suggests that ‘the bureaucratic administration which had been fully stretched to deal with the expansion of the first half of the century followed so soon by a devastating earthquake was not able to cope with another disaster on this scale.’ She blames not the disasters themselves but ‘rather the cumulative effect of them on an overstretched economy that may indeed have already been suffering from a diminution of trade or a lack of the raw materials sought in trade’ (French 2002, 135). Others have also observed decline in the second half of the 13th century (Muhly 1992, 11). However, it is difficult to square this apparent late weakness with ability of palaces to engage in large-scale construction in the late thirteenth century (Dickinson 2006a, 42). That said, a similar situation with extensive late building work occurred at Hattusas, which was also destroyed shortly afterwards (Bryce 2002, 256), and this indicates that the ability to perform such activities was no guarantee of long term stability.

Drews (1993, 37-47) also has doubts. In discussing proposed earthquakes at Mycenae, Tiryyns and Midea, as well as Knossos, Troy and Ugarit, he was surprised ‘that none of the six quakes, presumably the most severe that those particular sites ever suffered, resulted in casualties’ (Drews 1993, 39). However, what may plausibly be victims of earthquakes have been found at Mycenae, Tiryyns, Midea, Thebes and the Menelaiou. Although these are few, they match what Drews states he would expect from a site destroyed by earthquake, and where clearing took place, bodies could have been recovered (Drews 1993, 40). It has been noted that not all destructive earthquake events need necessarily cause excessive casualties and often this may depend on the time at which they take place (Ambraseys 1996, 32). Drews (1993, 40) also notes a lack of buried valuables, which might be expected of naturally destroyed palaces, but again such items as existed could have been recovered.

More significantly, Drews questions the ability of earthquakes to destroy cities, which he notes was extremely unusual in antiquity, and the common association of earthquakes with devastating fires (Drews 1993, 38). He argues that towns that burned throughout history were by and large burned deliberately, often after looting, and cites the elder Pliny as not mentioning fire as a danger linked with earthquakes (Drews 1993, 39). Tacitus, on the other hand, did mention ‘fires shining out from among the ruins’ of the 12 cities in Roman Asia ‘shattered’ by an earthquake in AD17 (Drews 1993, 39). It should be noted that Drews actually emphasises the lack of evidence for devastating ‘city-wide’ fires, since even he cannot completely deny that fires could be associated with earthquakes in the ancient world. This qualification may be important, since as French (1998, 4) noted for Mycenae, burning though widespread was not universal. Furthermore, citadels and palaces may have stored quantities of oil and other flammable materials that would make them, or areas within them, more vulnerable to fire. Åström suggested that oil lamps may have caused fires at Midea (Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1999, 214). During a recent earthquake in the ancient city of Bam, Iran, some 15,000 people were crushed to death as they slept and 70% of the houses, as well as much of the 2000 year old mud brick citadel were destroyed, but fire does not seem to have played a role (BBC 2003).

A further problem may lie in the relative chronology of these earthquake horizons. Muhly (1992, 11) notes that
there are serious disagreements regarding the precise dating of particular destructions, and it certainly may be questioned whether apparently simultaneous destructions at a particular site were in fact so when some areas have revealed no datable material. Extending synchronisms based on pottery to destructions between sites can be even more problematic, even when the sites are fairly close by, as was discussed in chapter 1 and mentioned above. In fact there is no reason why all destructions in any one pottery phase should have to have coincided, since the phases can last for some decades, and it seems that there has rather been a tendency to look for a catastrophic event. Even though single catastrophic quakes affecting the whole of southern Greece are unlikely, the collapse does not require such a dramatic scenario. As has been noted, Popham (1994) suggested the destructions could have occurred over some 25 or more years and Nur and Cline (2000, 61) have plausibly suggested that an ‘earthquake storm’ over a 50 year period c.1225-1175 could have been responsible for at least some destructions. This tentative claim seems to be valid, and it seems likely that earthquakes played some role in LBA destructions, as they have done at other times. Even so, the strong evidence for continuity at sites which provide evidence for earthquakes suggests that the collapse was not caused directly by them, but that there were other factors which prevented a continuation of palatial organisation along previous lines.

Resource depletion
The depletion of the environment and natural renewable resources has been cited as a consequence of the palatial system, one that was possibly related to its collapse, with ‘relentless exploitation of the soils and… excessive wood-cutting which had been performed in order to meet the demands of the hydrocephalic palace centers’ (Deger-Jalkotzy 1998a, 122). Deger-Jalkotzy (1996, 717-718) further believes that palatial territories were too small to meet the demands of the palace systems in terms of ‘supporting and feeding the masses of dependent personnel listed in the Linear B texts,’ although this view is highly debatable. While suggesting that agricultural products arguably deteriorated in quality, she notes that in the Argolid grain became larger and better after the demise of the palaces (Deger-Jalkotzy 1996, 718; 1998a, 122). Sanders (1978, 184, 187) also combined the arguments of overpopulation and resource depletion with problems in overseas trade, suggesting a shift to raiding, which she suggests may have been linked with the origin of some of the Sea Peoples.

However, even if the environment in Messenia, the region usually discussed in this context, was affected by deforestation, there were no discernible problems from the Linear B evidence in feeding the limited number of palace dependents, and in the Argolid, as in other areas, agriculture evidently continued as the basis of support for the population (Dickinson 2006a, 55; Foxhall 1995; Drews 1993, 81). It is conceivable that the wider population in Messenia could have been affected by problems related to the environment, but to some extent this depends on believing that the population was excessively high. It is by no means certain that all identified sites were occupied simultaneously in any one period, and there may have been invisible changes in settlement patterns related to land use. A long-term pattern of expansion and contraction of land use has been suggested that would see visible increases and decreases in total site numbers without any necessary population decrease, although postpalatial sites do seem generally to have been smaller and fewer (Dickinson 2006a, 84, 88).

Dickinson (2006a, 81) rightly observes that ‘the LBA population must have built up a great store of knowledge about the environment, its resources and the methods of exploiting them.’ Despite this caveat, it is still possible that overexploitation could have taken place, especially if other factors, including social factors and those that alter the environment, were involved (Diamond 2005, 9-10). Diamond (2005, 421) notes a number of reasons for this, such as a failure to anticipate or perceive a problem, or failure to solve it. For example, Janssen and Scheffer (2004) argue that what may seem to be bad decisions that lead to overexploitation of resources are affected by the role of sunk-costs. Effectively, decisions are based on past investments rather than future returns, leading to an unwillingness to abandon particular courses of action that may not or may no longer be beneficial. This is an interesting explanation for why seemingly irrational decisions may be made. Nevertheless, continuity of population in most areas suggests that serious overexploitation did not occur.

While overexploitation of natural resources may be able to explain the abandonment of some sites and even areas, in itself it does not explain the demise of palace society despite the continuity of Mycenaean culture. It could be argued that, as with climate change or drought hypotheses, environmental problems disrupted agriculture and caused unrest, which could have resulted in the destructions. But, many destroyed centres show immediate rebuilding, suggesting there were no such major problems in those areas. Bloedow (1995) has explicitly questioned the role of any environmental decline in the collapse of the Mycenaean region. This hypothesis is not convincing with relation to the collapse in Mycenaean Greece.

Invasion and migration
As noted above, invasion and migration have long dominated discussion of the collapse (Dickinson 2006a, 47). To some degree, this is due to the basic acceptance on some level that much later Greek traditions contain an extractable ‘kernel of historical truth’. This is shown by the widespread and long accepted notion of a Dorian invasion or migration from the north, conflated with the Return of the Herakleidai, who led them, recently supported by Eder (1998). This and associated population movements were thought to explain common social factors such as tribal groupings, as well as the distribution.
of dialects, in the later Greek world (Hall 2007, 45-48). The known historical population movements affecting the Greeks in the Hellenistic period and later the Romans have also been thought, explicitly or otherwise, to provide adequate analogues to hypothesised prehistoric population movements. Indeed, it is likely that these episodes, familiar to ancient historians and archaeologists studying the Aegean, are often unconsciously in the minds of those arguing for them. The influence of these factors is shown by the desire to identify invaders in the archaeological record, despite the difficulties in doing so. For example, Desborough (1972, 22-23) was forced to conclude that invaders, ‘Dorians led by Mycenaean kings’ from outside the Mycenaean world had destroyed the palaces and retreated rather than settling in Greece, as might be expected.

The Dorian hypothesis

The Dorian hypothesis has not remained static but has changed over time. Drews (1993, 62) notes that it was considered, until the late nineteenth century, that the Dorians entered the Peloponnese and Crete from the mountains of Thessaly in a fairly peaceful fashion. However, Maspero developed an influential theory of invasions and traced an invasion from the central Balkans into Greece, which was held responsible for the destructions at the end of the Late Bronze Age (Drews 1993, 62-63). This deviates from the Greek myths, which in no way suggest an origin for the Dorians outside Greece; Hammond’s suggestion that they were from Epirus has been influential, but is a purely modern theory (Dickinson 2006a, 4, 53). This Epirote origin theory may relate to the speculation that the Dorians were a pastoral people, and that this way of life was preserved in north-western Greece, which would arguably render the Dorians archaeologically invisible. Dickinson (2006a, 51) notes that a similar situation would hold true if the Dorians were from within Greece itself, as the myths suggest. It is difficult to resolve this argument. Since no traces of archaeologically invisible settlers or invaders would be found, the absence of positive evidence cannot be cited against this hypothesis. In fact, Winter (1977) has argued that invaders at a lower cultural level may leave no trace, and makes an analogy with the Galatian invasions and traced an invasion from the central Balkans into Greece, which was held responsible for the destructions at the end of the Late Bronze Age (Drews 1993, 62-63). This deviates from the Greek myths, which in no way suggest an origin for the Dorians outside Greece; Hammond’s suggestion that they were from Epirus has been influential, but is a purely modern theory (Dickinson 2006a, 4, 53). This Epirote origin theory may relate to the speculation that the Dorians were a pastoral people, and that this way of life was preserved in north-western Greece, which would arguably render the Dorians archaeologically invisible. Dickinson (2006a, 51) notes that a similar situation would hold true if the Dorians were from within Greece itself, as the myths suggest. It is difficult to resolve this argument. Since no traces of archaeologically invisible settlers or invaders would be found, the absence of positive evidence cannot be cited against this hypothesis. In fact, Winter (1977) has argued that invaders at a lower cultural level may leave no trace, and makes an analogy with the Galatian invasion of Anatolia and the Slavic invasion of Greece, known historically but not archaeologically. However, there are also features which are argued to provide positive evidence of newcomers, and these are discussed below.

From another perspective, it has been argued that the linguistic evidence often cited in support of an influx of Dorians does not in any case match with the Dorian hypothesis. This is because the Achaeans, displaced by the incoming Dorians, should have had a dialect akin to that of the Linear B tablets, whereas it was closer to the West Greek that the Laconian and Argolic Doric dialects were also related to (Hall 2007, 45). The dialect closest to Mycenaean Greek was Arcadian, and the myths cannot be used to explain this. Hall (2007, 45) notes that, in any case, there is no need to associate linguistic change with ‘a massive wave of immigration.’ Rather the distribution of dialects in Greece and the Aegean in:

three broad strips of contiguous territories stretching from west to east... raises the possibility that linguistic features shared by the dialects in these groups need not all be the inheritance of a proto-dialect, originally spoken in a primordial homeland, but rather the product of diffusional convergence between speakers who came into continuous and repeated contact with one another (Hall 2007, 45).

Thus the Doric dialects of the Argolid were most likely produced by contact with both West Greek and other dialects (Hall 2007, 45).

Chadwick (1976) and Hooker (1976, 173, 179) had suggested that the Dorians were in fact a submerged class already present in Mycenaean Greece who revolted against their Mycenaean masters, but this has not been widely supported and does not seem to be indicated by the archaeological or linguistic evidence (Drews 1993, 63 n.47; Dickinson 2006a, 53-54). While they need not have been a distinct class, or even have existed as an ethnic identity in the LBA, the ancestors of the people who later became Dorians may indeed have been the inhabitants of Mycenaean Greece. In any case, ‘the history of a language or dialect is not necessarily the same as the history of those who speak it’ (Hall 2007, 45).

The best solution to the problems of using later Greek traditions as evidence for invasions or migrations at the end of the LBA, or indeed for much else about the LBA, is to dismiss them (Hall 1997, 65 and 2007, 43-51; Dickinson 2006a, 54). This seems a more sound approach than favouring some stories or parts of a story over others for quite arbitrary reasons, adapting them, or trying to force them into a narrative dictated by interpretations of material evidence. Many of the myths concerned with population movements probably functioned as origin legends and charter myths and should be seen as the active media through which ethnicity and identity were expressed rather than as conflicting and contradictory recollections of a true historical past (Hall 1997, 41). On the arrival of the Dorians and the Herakleidai, Hall (1997, 64) states that the tradition ‘is best regarded as a composite and aggregative system of beliefs which had evolved from disparate origins and for the purposes of defining discrete ethnic groups.’ Indeed the description of the stages of the Dorian wanderings before settling in the Peloponnese, as recorded by Herodotus (1.56.3), is remarkably similar in character to descriptions of the arrival of Nahuatl speakers in the Valley of Mexico, and may have had a similar purpose in mediating a new and successful ethnic grouping and relating them to the surrounding peoples.16 The Dorian identity may have

16 Although Smith (1984) argues for the ‘essential’ historicity of these myths. However, he notes a particular cultural difference, in that
only been formed much later than c.1200 (Hall 1997, 65) and none of the significant Dorian centres were prominent in postpalatial times (Dickinson 2006a, 51). The mixed origins of what became Dorian populations also seems indicated by one of the three standard tribal names, Pamphyloi, or ‘people of all tribes’ although in some Dorian areas some or all of these standard names were not present (e.g. Corinth) and in others extra tribal names appear (e.g. Corcyra) (Dickinson 2006a, 54; Hall 2007, 47).

Archaeological invaders

Regardless of the myths, some archaeological evidence has been adduced as evidence for new populations in Greece which have sometimes been thought responsible for the collapse and/or subsequent changes, including a possible later Dorian migration argued by Desborough (1972), who attempted to identify it with a new ‘Sub-mycenaean culture,’ followed recently by Eder (1998). Rutter (2000b) has also argued for newcomers in postpalatial Greece, who were responsible for the destruction of the Mycenaen centres and Troy VIIa, and whom he has linked to south-eastern Romania by their pottery. Deger-Jalkotzy (1983) suggested that small groups of Viking-like newcomers from the Danube entered Greece and other areas, such as southern Italy and Sicily, Romania and Troy, and may have formed the nucleus of the Sea Peoples. Popham (1994) seems to imply a degree of ‘Italian’ responsibility for the destructions c.1200 and settlement, also identifying groups, the Sherden (Sardinians) and Shekelesh (Sicilians), with at least some of the Sea Peoples, on the basis of the similarity of the names with those in the Egyptian texts.

The archaeological evidence presented for these movements consists of a new class of handmade burnished pottery (HMB), first identified at Lefkandi, that does not belong in the Mycenaen repertoire, sometimes known rather pejoratively as ‘Barbarian Ware’ or even ‘Dorian ware,’ violin bow fibulae, the Naue II sword type, as well as cremation and single inhumation in cist graves (Hall 2007, 48; Rutter 2000b). These appear combined in a variety of ways, for example Deger-Jalkotzy (1983) associates fibulae, Naue II swords and HMB as representing one phenomenon, while Popham also associates weapons and HMB pottery as evidence of an Italian presence (Popham 1994, 285, 287, 288, 290-291, 295, 303). Rutter (2000b) notes that ‘most authorities see no compelling reason to accept such a connection’ between the three categories of evidence. Dickinson (2006a, 205) has noted that HMB and Italian bronzework in fact have different distributions, with bronzes found more in Achaea and Eastern Crete, suggesting that items diffused through trade and more complex social networks. Desborough (1964, 54-58) thought that bronze fibulae and Naue II swords appeared around 1200, but that the Mycenaen contexts in which they appeared suggested they did not belong to intrusive groups.

Although the Naue II type itself may have originated in central Europe and northern Italy, its introduction and adoption in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean, eventually becoming the only sword type in the Aegean and the standard sword in the Near East and subsequently continuing as an iron sword type, does not require any mass or other migration (Drews 1993, 64, 194). Rather swords of this kind could have been used by mercenaries, as Catling has suggested, or arrived through normal trade and contacts (Drews 1993, 64-65). The violin bow fibulae may also have come from Italian types, with early concentrations at Mycenae, Tiryns and western Greece, but likewise require no mass migration to explain their adoption and development (Dickinson 2006a, 161-162). Sherratt (2003, 41-44) in fact has argued that the increase in ‘status-defining categories of personal ornaments and weapons – fibulae, pins, knives, and weapons’ in the Aegean, Cyprus and eastern Mediterranean from the second half of the thirteenth century is a reflection of the increase in bronze working in the ‘Urnfield’ area and their distribution through maritime trade routes, particularly connected with Cyprus.

It remains difficult to interpret the significance of HMB, which has now been found in a range of contexts in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean (Belardelli and Bettelli 2007; Rutter 1990; Small 1990; Dickinson 2006a, 52; see chapter 5 Figure 5.11a). At present, HMB is known in Greece especially from Mycenae, Tiryns, Midea and Korakou in the Argolid, Aigeira in Achaea, Nichoria in Messenia,17 the Menelaion in Laconia, Dimini and Volos (Palia/Kastro) in Thessaly, Lefkandi, and in Crete where it belongs to LMIIIA-B at Kommos and Khania, although it always forms only a small proportion of the total pottery assemblage (Rutter 1990, 36; Adrimi-Sismani 2006, 475; Dickinson 2006a, 52). While in central Mycenaean areas and Crete it is not found in funerary contexts, it is known in peripheral areas, such as Kephallenia and Epirus, although these may be local handmade wares, but no HMB is known from well-excavated sites in the Aegean islands (Rutter 1990, 36). However, caution has been advised in drawing any conclusions about the significance of its distribution as it is known so far (Rutter 1990, 36). In fact the classification itself may cover a variety of pottery types of different origins, and northern, Balkan and Italian links have been suggested (Belardelli and Bettelli 2007). Kilian abandoned his earlier idea of Epirote links for HMB, in favour of an Italian connection (Dickinson pers. comm.). Others have posited the idea that the pottery marks a return to household production, but this has not been widely accepted (Small 1990, c.f. Rutter 1990, 29-34).

Significantly, HMB appears usually to have been locally produced at the sites where it has been found (Mountjoy

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17 But only 1 piece.
2001, 92), although this alone does not prove Small’s argument (1990) for its production by local Mycenaean Greeks, for as Rutter (1990, 32) states:

if traditional Aegean peasants were indeed producers of these HMB pots, why did they introduce so many stylistic novelties? Why should these novelties have been so similar at scattered sites throughout the Greek Mainland and as far away as Cyprus…?

It seems justifiable therefore to assume that it may represent ‘trade links and possibly small groups of (specialised) immigrants’ (Dickinson 2006a, 52). It is tempting, though admittedly speculative, to link these groups with the small-scale metalworkers that Sherratt (2003, 41) envisions as part of the economic and social shifts in the late thirteenth century. Given the HMB present at palace sites, it could be wondered whether the palaces would have been concerned with possible competition in production or access to finished goods and raw materials, or whether palatial control of such things may already have been weakened or whether some kind of palatial control or oversight may be posited.

Popham (1994) would seem to favour the earlier presence of Italians in Crete and the HMB from Kommos and Khania seems to have been imported, possibly from Sardinia and southern Italy respectively, where it is most closely paralleled (Rutter 2000b; Belardelli and Bettelli 2007). Italian parallels also seem to be closest for HMB from Tiryns, Lefkandi and Aliegea, so a mainland Italian presence in palatial and non-palatial areas is possible, if the equation of pots and people is accepted (Dickinson 2006a, 52). Belardelli and Bettelli (2007) also link with Italy the presence of Pseudominyan ware (Grey Ware), which often occurs at Greek sites with Italian types of HMB (see chapter 5 Figure 5.11b). Kilian (1988a, 133 and Fig. 7) had noted that Pseudominyan ware continued to develop on the Greek mainland in LH (in Thessaly and the Argolid), and was probably exported to Italy, followed by some reflux.

Whoever made and used HMB, there is in any case no intrinsic need to see them as hostile, even if they were from outside the Mycenaean area, and surely the small proportions of this material, as well as its use in Mycenaean sites and incorporation into the Mycenaean ceramic repertoire, indicates peaceful contact. Features of HMB are used in LHIIIC pottery as well as vice versa at Tiryns (Rutter 1990, 37-39). Why would those who had come to live amongst Mycenaeans and presumably made their living through their involvement in the Mycenaean society and economy wish to destroy it – and in the small numbers that may have been present, how indeed could this have been managed?

All of these features, Naue II swords, fibulae and HMB, began to appear in Greece before the collapse, and may indeed be more likely linked to economic changes beginning in the thirteenth century and continuing in the postpalatial period, as argued by Sherratt (2003) and Crielard (1998), than to massive population movements. HMB is present in pre-collapse Mycenae, Tiryns, Midea and Nichoria as well as parts of Crete from LMIIIA and after (Dickinson 2006a, 52). Naue II swords are now known to have appeared before the collapse and violin bow fibulae also appeared at Tiryns before the destruction c.1200 (Dickinson 2006a, 72, 161). While the movement of small groups and individuals, skills and ideas, seems likely enough, as it would be in any period, it is extremely unlikely that these features taken together or individually can represent any significant change in population or that this would have been a reason for the collapse of the palaces.

Finally, Desborough (1972, 109-11) placed great emphasis on cist cemeteries as indicative of a new population from Epirus that ‘fused with, and dominated, the surviving elements’ in the second half of the twelfth century. But this view has never been entirely persuasive, as Snodgrass (2000 [1971], 314ff.) had already argued for local cultural developments. Deposited pots and metalwork found in cist tombs also appear in chamber tombs, blurring their significance as ethnic indicia (Dickinson 2006a, 51). As for single burials in cist and pit graves, these are known throughout the Mycenaean period in central and peripheral areas, while they are not found in later Doric areas such as Laconia and Messenia, at least until much later (Voutsaki 2000). Notable examples do occur in Attica and Euboea, but according to tradition these areas did not receive new populations (Dickinson 2006a, 51). Cist cemeteries also have differences between them, and so are unlikely to represent one homogeneous culture (Dickinson 2006a, 52). Rather than any sudden shifts in material and burial culture there are gradual and ‘spatially uneven’ changes (Voutsaki 2000, 232). Both Antonaccio (2000, 613) and Voutsaki (2000, 233) have rightly criticised Eder (1998) for the general attribution of changes in material culture or behaviour to immigrants, and this is surely correct. Neither pots, swords, fibulae or burial practices are necessarily markers of ethnicity, and without the background of the Greek traditions themselves it is doubtful that this kind of migration model would have remained as influential as it has.

The current status of migration theory

Debate about migration theory itself and its place in archaeological explanation also leads to problems in accepting it, even though it has enjoyed a long tenure in archaeology. As an explanatory device it has attracted criticism at least since the first half of the twentieth century (Renfrew and Bahn 1996, 36). In spite of its prominance ‘migration has never been formally articulated as a general principle of historical explanation’ yet ‘it has nevertheless been invoked as an ad hoc explanation for cultural, linguistic, and racial change in such an extraordinary number of individual cases that to speak of a migrationist school of explanation seems wholly appropriate’ (Adams et al. 1978, 483). Typically, migrations have been posited as mass
movements of waves of distinct groups from homelands, which thus leave archaeologically identifiable traits (Adams et al. 1978, 486-487), and this is how they have often been envisioned in connection with the collapse of the Mycenaean palace societies, the postpalatial period and the occurrence of ‘Aegean’ or Aegean derived material culture elsewhere in the Mediterranean (see chapter 5 for further discussion).

However, it is now recognised that material culture, as well as ethnicity and the creation and maintenance of identity, operate in much more complex ways (Hall 1997). There is no simple equation between a material culture and political, ethnic or linguistic groups, and those who share a political or ethnic identity may be diverse linguistically and culturally. Simplistic and untenable assumptions to the contrary, suppose ‘an organic connection between social groups and the cultural property they disperse’ (Burmeister 2000, 540). Thus Burmeister (2000, 540) rightly comments that:

> The conceptualisation of migration… as an invasion of foreign territories in the manner of a tidal wave (Rouse 1986, 177)… is based on unfounded assumptions. Mass migrations are extremely rare, and the improved state of research has often made it necessary to replace the supposition of prehistoric mass migrations with the recognition of a process of infiltration that took place over centuries…

Migration theory has its origins in the traditions of many cultures, but that in itself does not make these traditions historical fact, as the discussion of the Dorian hypothesis has shown. It became a particularly popular explanatory device in the nineteenth century (as noted with Maspero, above) and one factor in explaining its popularity, at least in the western Judaeo-Christian intellectual tradition, may be that it could be reconciled ‘with a literal interpretation of the Old Testament’ (Adams et al. 1978, 484). This desire to reconcile literary and mythical traditions, especially biblical or classical, with scientific archaeology is understandable. In the context of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean, Drews (1993, 53-72) and Silberman (1998) have observed the development of migration theories as reflecting contemporary culture and intellectual trends. However, despite the constant and justified criticisms of migration theory ‘not only are many old migration theories still unchallenged, but new ones are constantly being proposed’ (Adams et al. 1978, 486).

While it is certainly necessary and acceptable to involve the movements of people and groups in historical and archaeological interpretations, this must be achieved through the acceptance of demonstrated and well-known kinds of movement, rather than simply invoking mass migration as a convenient explanation. Indeed, these processes, while they may be difficult to identify archaeologically, are nevertheless well researched and widely published (Burmeister 2000; Anthony 1990). More plausible kinds of population movement are discussed in chapter 5.

**Anxiety**

Another pillar of invasion hypotheses more generally rests on the identification of ‘anxiety’ in the later thirteenth century, which it is usually argued is indicated by work on fortifications at major citadels, at Mycenae, Tiryns and Midea and the construction of Glā, measures taken to secure water supplies from inside citadels and the building of a wall across the Isthmus (Popham 1994, 280-281; Deger-Jalkotzy 1999, 128-129; Dickinson 2006a, 42; Broner 1966). Popham (1994, 280) even suggests that the destruction of possibly walled Pylos, which he places early in the thirteenth century, as against the more widely accepted c.1200 dating (Mountjoy 1997), was a catalyst for these developments in the rest of Greece. Early destructions at Thebes and possibly Orchomenos have been identified as signs of ‘trouble’ as have those at Mycenae, Zygouries and Glā (Popham 1994, 280; Dickinson 2006a, 42). The abandonment after LHIIIB1 of the ‘Ivory Houses’ outside the citadel at Mycenae, which had some administrative function, has also been considered significant (Dickinson 2006a, 42). Drews (1993, 217) has suggested that ‘hordes’ of ‘northern Achaeans’, Greek ‘barbarians’, attacked Thebes and Troy, as well working as mercenaries in the Argolid, and that it was this ‘alarm about what was happening in the north’ that stimulated increased defensive measures. In this way, archaeological events have been used to develop historical narratives, but these are based solely on modern interpretation and inference, and arguments can often be dangerously circular.

As well as a sense of physical danger, some argue that there was economic anxiety and a general sense of ‘insecurity and impending crisis’ (Voutsaki and Killen 2001, 7). Following what may have been a boom in exports for the palaces in LHIIIA2, there seems to have been a decline in exports throughout the thirteenth century, with an increase in local production of Mycenaean style goods elsewhere (Mountjoy 1993, 170-175; Dickinson 2006a, 41-42). Deger-Jalkotzy (2008, 387) too suggests that ‘the archaeological record of the the last decades of the thirteenth century (LHIIIB2) reflects instability and decline.’ Also at this time, the palace at Pylos seems to have been converted into a factory for producing perfumed olive oil, which may suggest concerns over controlling production and possible economic or other problems (Dickinson 2006a, 42). As noted above, Sherratt (2001; 2003) sees this in the context of import substitution while others have conjectured that trade was being disrupted either by the Sea Peoples or even that Mycenaean goods may have

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18 Recent investigations at Pylos revealing a ‘linear feature’ may indicate that the LBA site was fortified, although further investigation is required before this can be confirmed (Shepherd 2001a, 337-339, 378). That caution should be exercised is suggested by the recent reinterpretation of supposed defensive earthworks at Tikal as hydrological features (Silverstein et al. 2009).
been boycotted or banned in certain ports of the Near East, although this last point relies on the Mycenaean interpretation of Ahhiyawa and a particular interpretation of a single text (Bryce 1998, 343).

Evidence of a military threat and perhaps a threat specifically from the sea has often been adduced from the Linear B tablets at Pylos (Palmer 1961, 132-155; 1963, 147-163; Shelmerdine 2001a, 375 and n. 285). Tablet Jn 829 records the amount of metal to be given by various parties, including religious figures to palace officials and this ‘temple bronze’ is specified as for use in making light javelins and spear points. However, the problem in interpreting this as signifying immediate danger is that it cannot be known whether this was a normal activity or an unusual arrangement, nor if it was, what the motivations for it were (Palaima 2004, 290-292). This is likewise true for the o-ka tablets, which appear to show the mobilisation and arrangement of forces for watching the coast (Dickinson 2006a, 55). Shelmerdine (2001a, 375 and n. 286) notes that many Linear B specialists are not convinced that the tablets can be interpreted as showing any immediate crisis.

Objectively, the interpretation of the thirteenth century as an ‘age of anxiety,’ is speculative and the notion that some kind of serious military threat is indicated seems based upon the later occurrence of the collapse itself – thus hindsight plays a role in the search for a decline preceding collapse. A study of the construction of the fortifications casts serious doubt on whether they could have been built quickly, and the interest in access to water need not be considered merely as a response to the threat of siege as opposed to a basic improvement of site facilities (Wardle 1994, 229; Loader 1998, 65 n.16, 72-73). Rather these developments, as with constructions in the Aegean islands in the later thirteenth and twelfth centuries (see chapter 5) can more plausibly be seen as ‘expressions of power and wealth, designed to impress subjects and rivals and to strengthen control over territories’ (Dickinson 2006a, 42). Driessen (1999, 16) too has noted that ‘monumental buildings… are almost always constructed in critical periods of political consolidation’ and this in itself must argue against the ineffectiveness or inability of the palaces in LHIIIB, although it could reflect various levels of competition. Voutsaki’s interpretation (2001, 205) of these, along with the apparent restricted access to and palatial control of prestige goods, rather argues for the palaces’ continued ability to control or mobilise certain resources at this late stage. Furthermore, it was not only fortifications that were extended, but also roads, bridges and dams (Voutsaki 2001, 204). The relevance of the putative LBA Isthmian wall is more problematic in that it is of uncertain date and purpose, and may not even be a single structure (Morgan 1999, 362-365). Given this, Dickinson (2006a, 42) suggests that it should be omitted from the discussion. Certainly, undue weight should not be placed on such ambiguous evidence.

To characterise palatial Greece in the period immediately before the collapse as experiencing an anxious or troubled time, or a period of decline, is to link together disparate evidence, all of which could have many other possibly more plausible interpretations, and to further link this with the collapse seems dangerously circular. While it may be a superficially attractive theory, one which fits often assumed notions of three-stage organic social development, declines are difficult to identify or quantify and their connection with collapse is far from assured; certainly, no decline is necessary even when a collapse occurs (see chapter 2). Although the factors outlined above may indeed have been real, and may have affected the Mycenaean world and individual polities, there is no unique, firm causal link between them and the collapse.

Changes in warfare

One problem with invasion hypotheses has been explaining convincingly how so many major sites could or should have been defeated within such a seemingly short space of time. Indeed, since the Mycenaeans are often characterised as warlike or militaristic, it would almost seem as if they loved strife for its own sake (Taylour 1983, 135), it may be thought surprising that their cities and fortified citadels, their well-equipped warriors and indeed their social system could have all been destroyed by the predations of ‘barbarians’ of any sort. Hence some have suggested invasions or migrations following some kind of weakening internal breakdown (e.g. Sandars 1978, 186, 197). Others may follow a tendentious view that ‘matured’ societies experience ‘decadence’, and become militarily weak. Drews (1993) however, has recently offered a hypothesis that links changes in weapons and military tactics with social changes and the collapse in Greece and the eastern Mediterranean, and which purports to explain how so many LBA states could be brought down in one ‘Catastrophe’.

Drews’ hypothesis is based on the notion that LBA polities essentially relied on chariot borne archers and engaged in chariot warfare (Drews 1993, 104, 114, 119, 124):

The Catastrophe came about when men in ‘barbarian’ lands awoke to a truth that had been with them for some time: the chariot-based forces on which the Great Kingdoms relied could be overwhelmed by swarming infantries, the infantrymen being equipped with javelins, long

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16 The persistent idea of ‘warlike Mycenaean’ may stem from early associations with the Homeric epics and oppositions with supposedly ‘peaceful Minoans’ in modern times. Deger-Jalkotzy (1999) presents evidence for links between militarism and social status, and Davis and Bennet (1999, 106) argue for the importance of warfare in the rise of Pylos. While some degree of warfare and conflict is likely, actual militarism in the sense of an unusual propensity for warfare or violence should be disconnected to some degree from ideological militarism, which is not an unusual feature of elite self-definition (Dickinson 2006a, 36). A corrective may be to consider the warlike nature of early Rome as it expanded its influence (Mattingly 2006, 6) and the sometimes extreme behaviour that took place (OCD 1618).
swords, and a few essential pieces of defensive armor (Drews 1993, 104).

The archaeological evidence for these changes in weapons has been systematically reviewed (Drews 1993, 174-208) and unusually, Drews (1993, 221-222) also gives a vivid description of how he views the actual destruction of citadels and palace sites and who he believes the destroyers were. ‘Raiders from Locris, Phocis and inland Thessaly’ may have destroyed Boeotian palaces while sea raiders from coastal Thessaly and Achaea Phthiotis were responsible for other destructions, including Koukounaries on Paros (Drews 1993, 221-222). While suggesting that sieges may have played a role, he emphasises the role of thousands of ‘swarming javeliners’ who would allegedly have been difficult for chariot archers to target, and who stormed cities (Drews 1993, 222).

Although he has produced a wide-ranging and stimulating discussion, Drews’ basic arguments have not met with widespread acceptance (Cline 1997; Dickinson 1999c; Rutter 2000b). In the first place, Rutter (2000b) rightly notes the difficulty in attributing a single cause as responsible for ‘a very complex and multifaceted combination of events that involved a very large area over a century or more of time.’ Similarly, Cline (1997, 129) disputes whether Drews’ argument actually explains why the ‘Catastrophe’ occurred and suggests rather that we ‘most likely must continue to look at a complex multiple cause-and-effect series of events and processes’ stating that ‘his ‘who’ and ‘how’ are… problematic, while his ‘why’ is the least satisfactory.’ In fact, the basic premise of Drews’ hypothesis, the reliance of LBA polities on chariot warfare, is extremely doubtful as applied to Greece, and indeed other areas, and this seriously undermines his argument.

Firstly, on practical grounds alone, the topography and terrain of Greece would effectively prevent any reliance on chariots as the main instruments of battle, especially in the way that Drews envisions their use as mobile carts for archers (Drews 1993, 119; Rutter 2000b; Dickinson 1999c, 23-24). Drews (1988) has argued that the Mycenaean elite were in fact originally invading chariot-borne Proto-Indoeuropean speakers who used chariots to maintain their dominance. This is not convincing for various reasons (Dickinson 1999a), but in this context it should be noted that early representations of warfare from the Shaft Grave period ‘consistently present warriors on foot’ while the stele with chariot scenes ‘derive important iconographical elements from the Near East’ (Dickinson 1999c, 21). The importance of foot soldiers is supported by the predominance of hand-to-hand weapons as opposed to arrowheads in graves, at least early on. This may represent a difference between ideology and practice – between how elites thought they should define themselves and what was actually done in practice, and, as interaction between Greece and the Near East became more intense, the importance to Mycenaean palaces of having and being seen to have chariots may have increased (Dickinson 1999c, 22). But as Driessen (1999, 14) comments ‘we may argue whether its military role exceeded its symbolic significance.’

Drews (1993, 135-163) further argues that footsoldiers played an insignificant role, subordinate to chariot-warfare, as skirmishers or runners and dismisses the postpalatial ‘Warrior Vase’, with its scene of marching footsoldiers, as a valid example of typical Mycenaean practices. However, he also dismisses from the argument the earlier and thus more relevant Pyllos ‘Battle Scene’ fresco (Figure 3.1; Drews 1993, 140). He suggests that the scene shows high status warriors from the Pyllos palace clad in boar’s tusk helmets defeating skin-clad ‘savages’, but rather than an infantry battle, he suggests that it is a guerrilla, a set of individual duels. This fits with his notion that ‘civilized’ kingdoms would use footsoldiers when fighting barbarians, usually because they lived in places where chariots could not operate. In fact, a Hittite letter from the Mašat archive does refer to the use of chariot corps and footsoldiers against the Kaska (Kuhrt 1995, 257).

![Figure 3.1 Pylos Battle Scene Fresco. Source: Drews 1993, 141 Plate 2.](image-url)

Drews is unsure whether the fresco shows a contemporary scene or a legendary event, but surely whatever the subject matter contemporary practices would affect the portrayal, as in classical renditions of myths or Renaissance or any number of other paintings of historical scenes. Close examination of the Battle Scene must in any case affect Drews’ conclusion since fragment 26 H 64 appears to show ‘warriors and a chariot’ advancing right and the combat frieze ‘seems to have depicted both stationary chariot scenes and combats among infantrymen’ (Davis and Bennet 1999, 109 and n.16). This combination could have been necessary in a

20 See also Brecoulaki et al. (2008) on the probably female ‘Archer fragment’ from the megaron of Pylos.
variety of military encounters, since in attempting to take forts and towns through siege, chariots would have offered no advantage, but in fighting an enemy on foot, chariots may have looked impressive and threatening (Dickinson 1999c, 23). The Amarna Letters also show that in the Near East requests for archers and infantry were a priority, and in Greece hand-to-hand weapons remained prevalent, which may reflect the practical side of warfare rather than any elite ideology, which may have been more focussed on chariots as a form of elite expression (Dickinson 1999c, 23-24).

The exact nature of LBA warfare remains somewhat unclear and in fact Drews (1993, 98) admits that much is guesswork, but it is sure to have included a mix of weapons and tactics, which were deployed as leaders saw fit, and which may in no way be accurately represented by any painting, poem or other text. As for the actual advantage that Drews’ barbarian footsoldiers would have had over the forces that could be mustered by a state, this also remains unclear, although in chapter 2, it was noted that ‘barbarians’ could, under certain circumstances, defeat better-equipped modern armies. However, any recourse to numerical superiority of barbarian Greek ‘hordes’ is purely speculative and we can also suppose a basic advantage of local knowledge and resources to defenders. What can be noted is that it is unlikely to have been difficult to devise tactics to counter chariots, even if they had never been encountered, so any sudden revolution in tactics is unlikely (Dickinson 1999c, 23). Further, if Drews (1993, 153-157) is correct that barbarian contingents were hired as state mercenaries, then states would have already been familiar with and able to deal with their tactics. Even if there was a novel element to tactics, it is extremely difficult to see them as remaining unknown or successful for a period of perhaps 50 years (Dickinson 1999c, 24).

Overall, Drews’ thesis cannot be accepted, since any sudden and devastating revolution in tactics is implausible, and his theory is in fact a new variation on the theme of barbarian invasions. It is difficult to see why all those living outside or on the margins of more complex societies (‘barbarians’) throughout the eastern Mediterranean would suddenly wish to destroy them, even if they were able to, and this still relies on a rather unsophisticated characterisation of barbarians (see discussion in chapter 2). For Greece specifically, Dickinson (1999c, 25) states of Drews’ theory: I feel great scepticism about his notion that warlike ‘barbarians,’ in this case ‘north Greek,’ populations lived in close proximity to the most civilised parts of the Mycenaean world in the Peloponnese and Boeotia. Regions like Phocis, Locris, Phthiotis, Aetolia and Thessaly may not have been under the control of palaces with literate administration, but archaeologically they look very like the rest of the Mycenaean world, certainly no more warlike.

It may be though that, taken over a longer period of time, changes in access to weapons and in styles of fighting could quite plausibly have been involved in social change.

**Plagues and epidemics**

Significant decline and movement of population is one of the most noted features of the collapse (Dickinson 2006a, 67, 93-98). Although it is impossible to be precise about the level of actual population loss, given the fact that in some areas populations seem to have nucleated at certain sites and some regions (e.g. Achaea, Eubeoan Gulf) seem not to have experienced significant if any depopulation, it seems to be most notable in Messenia and perhaps the southern Argolid, given the level of abandonment of even small sites (Eder 2006, 557; Crielaard 2006; Dickinson 1994, 308; Van Andel and Runnels 1987, 98). However, older interpretations of massive population decline have been and remain influential (Dickinson 2006a, 93), and some scholars have sought to explain the collapse, long-term population decline, as well as the introduction of cremation, by suggesting that repeated episodes of bubonic plague were responsible (Williams 1962; Walløe 1999).

Williams (1962, 109) linked together the collapses or significant changes in the Aegean, the Near East, Egypt and Anatolia, and dismissed political events, the adoption of iron and invasions or migrations as likely causes of such widespread change. He also doubted any superiority in numbers or weaponry that putative invaders might have had, for although he believed in the validity of a Dorian invasion, he saw it as taking place possibly over a century with small numbers that were ‘not militarily formidable’ into an essentially depopulated land (Williams 1962, 110, 120). Walloe (1999, 121-122, 126) similarly dismisses other explanations for collapse and links together the Mycenaean and Hittite collapses, as well as other disturbances in the eastern Mediterranean.

Williams (1962, 113) notes that plague is extremely infectious and often deadly, tends to affect large areas, can spread rapidly and linger for years and affects both animals and humans. Indeed it is significant when considering the agricultural nature of ancient societies that many diseases humans are susceptible to are shared by domesticated animals and rodents, and McNeill (1998, 69-70) observes that ‘probably all of the distinctive infectious diseases of civilization transferred to human populations from animal herds.’ Large numbers of sheep are known to have existed from Linear B, with more than 100,000 recorded at Knossos and a sizeable amount from Pylos, while other domesticates were also known (Dickinson 1994, 48). It would seem possible that, with the development of large herds, some communicable diseases could have developed or come to affect humans more seriously.

Williams (1962, 111-112, 113-114) provides descriptions of many historical instances of plague from the classical
world and medieval Europe, noting its devastating effects on human and animal populations. The Justinianic plague of AD 541, for example, recurred for over 200 years up to c. AD 761 and is reckoned to have killed some 200,000 people in Constantinople, 40% of its population, while an outbreak in AD 599-600 killed 15% of the population of Italy and southern France (Naphy and Spicer 2004, 14-15). The later Black Death may have killed a third of the population of Europe in three years and half the population of Britain between AD 1348-62 (Williams 1962, 112). The effects on population may have lasted some centuries, reducing it until outbreaks eventually ceased (Walløe 1999, 122). Walløe (1999, 122) also notes these two pandemics and suggests that a similar pattern of events occurred in Greece between 1200 and 700.

These historical plagues had serious effects at local and wider levels. Famine is a noted short-term effect while another is population movement, with some people fleeing infected areas (Walløe 1999, 121-122). This feature is notable in England between AD 1350-1500 with the abandonment of some 1300 villages and migration into urban centres which were also affected by plague, although it should be noted that there are competing explanations for the phenomenon of deserted medieval villages (Naphy and Spicer 2004, 35). Plague could evidently cause profound changes in settlement patterns and demography over time. Walløe (1999, 123) notes that in the aftermath of the Justinianic plague in Italy, there was some movement of a scattered population to 'concentrated settlements on nearby hilltops or to places which were more defensible,' which can be compared with changes in settlement patterns around c.1200 and after in Greece and the Aegean, but especially in Crete (Rutter 1992, 68-70; Haggis 1993; Nowicki 1998 and 2000).

Walløe (1999, 123) also notes that mortality was higher amongst the ruling classes, perhaps because they were a smaller proportion of society as a whole, while another important effect of the Black Death in England was the impact on trades, with apprenticeships being shortened and recruitment taking place at a younger age and from outside traditional groups, thus plague ‘at almost every level of society, increased opportunity and mobility’ (Naphy and Spicer 2004, 35). If the plague hypothesis is valid, it may have affected the elite most seriously and this could have played a role in causing the demise of the palatial system and the skills and economy it supported both directly and indirectly. It could plausibly explain the loss of literacy, which was extremely restricted, presumably amongst the elite or a professional class, but could also explain the continuity and transformation in the artistic repertoire and the loss of certain probably quite limited skills in specialist craft production (Rutter 1992, 70; Dickinson 2006a, 72-73).

Plague also had a noted effect on the operations of organised power both central authorities and at local levels, disrupting incomes from taxation as well as causing organisational problems due to increased mortality itself (Walløe 1999, 123). Social unrest, disorder and civil war could result from this, due in part to the increased burden placed on the general population to create more revenue. Whilst the economies of the palace societies of Mycenaean Greece were very different in scale and complexity to those of the later Roman Empire and medieval England, it is easy to see that high mortality due to plague would similarly disrupt agriculture and the production and circulation of other goods and interrupt the functioning of society generally. Similar outbreaks of lawlessness and banditry could have occurred and Walløe (1999, 123) notes of Italy that the elite were no longer able to protect the population, leading to the changed settlement patterns mentioned above. This lack of strong central power and instability seems to fit with the kind of unstable and more mobile society suggested for postpalatial Greece (Dickinson 2006a, 69-72). Furthermore, a younger society forced to adapt to new conditions and already dislocated might be thought more willing to engage in the mobility and opportunism that is suggested for postpalatial Greece (Dickinson 2006a, 66, 71). Taken together, these changes would initiate something of a new outlook on life that would remember the palatial past and material heritage but primarily seek to deal with present conditions with existing skills and knowledge.

Williams (1962, 114, 116, 122) also suggests that the rite of cremation may have been adopted because of the plague, as Thucydides noted occurred during the Athenian plague, although he also notes that it would only be possible ‘where the attack rate was relatively low’. While cremation may have spread from Anatolia westwards to be used sporadically in Greece, as Williams (1962, 124) argues, it was also in use in Italy and could have been adopted from both regions. Nevertheless, cremations were rare and the pattern of early cremations does not follow the pattern of palatial destructions, with the exception of those at Khania (near Mycenae) and Thebes, which belong to LHIIIIC Middle. Most early cremations occurred in the non-palatial regions of the western Peloponnese, Achaea, Elis and Arcadia, the Aegean Islands and Crete (Dickinson 2006a, 73). In the postpalatial period cremation was sometimes used but usually alongside inhumation and while it became more popular and was used in more sites in the EIA the regional trend continued. Cremation only became standard in Athens in the PG period (Dickinson 2006a, 186). It seems unlikely that the selective adoption of cremation had anything to do with any plague that may have affected palatial regions.

The main problem with the plague hypothesis is the lack of positive evidence. Walløe (1999, 123-125) attempts to use a description of a plague amongst the Philistines from the Old Testament First Book of Samuel, which it is argued contains historical detail pertaining to the 11th century, as contemporary ‘strong documentary evidence of bubonic plague in the same region at the relevant
time’. But this evidence can only be analogical, since it hardly relates to the same region and falls too late to provide positive evidence of plague in Greece around 1200. Walløe (1999, 123, 125) also argues that the Philistines were of Aegean origin, although this not necessary to his theory, and he seems to suggest that plague may have been communicated between Greece and Philistia via ship borne rodents. It is perhaps implied that plague was carried from Greece to Philistia where it recurred subsequently.

There is evidence for plagues in the LBA (probably late 14th century) affecting Alashiya21 (Moran 1992, 107) and the Hittites (Bryce 1998, 223-225), which, according to the texts at least, had devastating effects on the copper industry in Alashiya, and religion and agriculture in Hatti, also laying it more exposed to attack. Since there were interconnections between all these regions, it is perfectly possible that any communicable plague of disease could have been transmitted to the Aegean region. A lack of textual evidence for plague in Greece is not surprising, given the restricted uses of literacy no explicit mention would be expected, although some of the Pylian evidence often used to argue for an imminent military threat could be interpreted to suggest reactions to plague, but that is equally speculative.

Much about the plague hypothesis seems attractive in the way it could plausibly explain the changes in settlement pattern, material and social culture and long-term decline in population levels. The palace systems may have been unable to cope with any serious plague and those running them would have been directly affected, as would the wider population. In explaining the variability of collapse, it could also be suggested that if a plague entered Greece from outside, it would be more likely to enter and affect palatial areas with contacts abroad, and those areas more closely linked. Although absolute numbers are difficult to determine, palatial areas may have been more densely settled and thus more seriously affected, while possibly less populous peripheral areas may have been less affected, although it is the case that both rural and more densely settled areas can be affected by plague; effects would simply be more archaeologically visible in palatial areas through the demise of the palace centres themselves. If Messenia was as densely populated as some suggest, it may best fit this scenario. It has been noted that the first occurrence of Black Death affected both rural and urban areas but in its second outbreak was more limited to the more densely populated places (Naphy and Spicer 2004, 34-35). Such a pattern could explain the prolonged decline of population in some parts of Greece, including those affected by the collapse but which enjoyed a degree of postpalatial prosperity, such as Tiryns. To explain the destructions themselves, however, plague is not enough; it would have to have been coupled with violence, but in such circumstances that is not unimaginable.

Warfare, internal strife and competition

An alternative approach to a single wave of destructions was suggested by Mylonas, who thought that the contemporaneity of the destructions had been overemphasised (1966). This possibility has similarly been stressed in more recent approaches (e.g. Popham 1994, 281; see chapter 1). Rather than one wave of destruction, interstate warfare and/or internal problems could have been responsible for destructions at major sites at different times (Hooker 1976, 177). This suggests that there could be a variety of reasons for the destructions and that different groups could have carried them out at different times, and mitigates the requirement for the presence of any external enemy.

Mylonas’s inspiration for his argument was the later Greek myths associated with Mycenaean centres such as Thebes and Mycenae and the stories of their ruling families. Even though the narrative and historical value of the later myths as relating to the LBA may rightly be questioned, they nevertheless suggest by analogy a plausible truth about the nature of Mycenaean palace society, that it may have been made up of a network of elites within and between regions. Palace states may have existed as ‘centres of alliances and systems of subordination and dependence’ (Dickinson pers.comm.). In the Argolid, with its high concentration of major sites, this may be especially true but links between palace states and non-palace state areas may also be expected (Eder 2007) and some palatial interest in the Aegean islands, especially Rhodes, also seems likely.

Although little is known about their interrelations from Linear B, which contains few references, the archaeology and pottery does indicate that exchange took place between palaces on the mainland and between the mainland and Crete (Bennet 2006 201-204). Gift exchange between elites, as well as intermarriage and hospitality, would also have served both to link elites across regions, as well as to reinforce their different status within the local community (Voutsaki 2001, 206). However, these links need not in any way prevent warfare or competition between palatial elites (Driessen 1999, 19) and this may have taken the form of conspicuous expenditure on fortifications, often cited as a sign of anxiety. In fact, Tainter (1988, 202) has suggested the collapse was caused when ‘Mycenaean petty states became… locked into competitive spirals, each had to make ever greater investments in military strength and organizational complexity’ leading to ‘essentially simultaneous’ collapse.

Warfare itself has been identified as a ‘most intensive way of peer polity interaction’ (Driessen 1999, 20). The Linear B records clearly demonstrate that palaces had military interests, since they list military resources, weapons, armour and chariots, and possibly sometimes

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21 Alashiya has usually been identified as (either all or part of) Cyprus, a conclusion now made much more likely through scientific analysis of Alashiya letters from Amarna and Ugarit (see Goren et al. 2003).
the mobilisation of forces (Palmer 1961, 172-182, 203 and Palmer 1963; 147-163, 314-337; Taylour 1983, 135-141; Dickinson 2006a, 55). By analogy with the classical period, with its mix of independent political units, we may expect that warfare was not an unusual feature in LBA Greece (Deger-Jalkotzy 1999, 124), but even when warfare was more usual than peace, it need not indicate a ‘militaristic’ or ‘warlike’ society.

Although Rutter (2000b) criticises Mylonas’s hypothesis because it fails to explain why the palaces were not rebuilt, it could be plausible that, should a dynasty have been dethroned by another, the replacement, whether it be the conqueror or a new local elite, may have chosen to express its power in a different way, rather than ape its failed predecessor. This depends on how they wished to legitimise and identify themselves. Equally, if the elite of a given area suffered sufficiently high casualties in battle, the social infrastructure supporting the palace and linking it with its hinterland and region may have disappeared or at least changed substantially. This severance or dislocation would have precluded, reduced or hindered resource mobilisation through existing social links and made it difficult for a palatial authority to continue to dominate in quite the same way. Altered social linkages may have resulted in a failure to replicate exactly palace ideology with its vertical hierarchy, and the case of Tiryns, with its elite housing, may represent such a restructuring (see chapter 6). Warfare could equally cause problems through rendering areas unsafe for agriculture and local populations, causing flight and/or nucleation. Thus internecine warfare could explain the physical destruction of palace societies over a prolonged period, as well as changed settlement patterns.

To these factors linked with warfare between polities can be added conflict within polities. This can act as a destabilising factor in itself or as an added feature alongside other problems. Conflict within polities can take many forms and only a few will be mentioned here. Mylonas’ (1966) notion of conflict within and between ruling families is hardly far-fetched, even if deriving from mythical examples. Competition within royal families and problematic successions can often provide destabilising factors that can lead to serious divisions within polities and civil war. The wars in England between Stephen and Matilda, following the death of Henry I, resulted in civil war, a divided England, revolt in Wales and the temporary loss of Northumbria (Gillingham and Griffiths 2000, 19-23). However, this did not lead to the collapse of England. In the Hittite kingdom, rival claims to the throne were evidently problematic due to the number of royal descendants and these concerns were expressed quite frankly by Tudhaliya IV (Bryce 1998, 332-334). In this case, these could have played a role in the Hittite collapse (discussed further in chapter 4). Rivals could provide alternative leadership (Eisenstadt’s (1988) ‘antisystems’, see Chapter 2) and exacerbate existing problems, especially concerning the maintenance and integration of vassals within one overarching structure. Although we know nothing of the arrangements for the succession of wanaktes in LBA Greece, we may expect that similar situations could have arisen within any royal family.

The presence of other leading families could also pose a threat, and indeed faction and competition is cited as a feature of the formation of palace culture (Wright 2001; 2006, 41). Furthermore, it seems that in the course of palatial expansion, there was a military aspect (Davis and Bennet 1999, 106) as well as the incorporation of local elites into bigger power structures presumably through other means (Shelmerdine 2001b, 127, 128; Palaima 2006, 68-69). These local elites will have continued to exist and the relationship between them and palace elites should be seen as reciprocal. However, the existence of local elites would have formed an ever present potential for social cleavage and in the context of palatial relations with local elites, this can be seen as a real threat to the maintenance of stability and palatial authority. The existence of other leading families at the centre would have had a similar effect.

Although the case for interstate warfare, internal strife and competition as causes or features of the collapse cannot be proven, they are ‘eminently plausible’ (Dickinson 2006a, 54). It is inherently likely that these dynamic palace polities, each containing a range and variety of individuals and groups with individual motivations, engaged in reciprocal relationships and balances of power and interest, did have the potential for instability and the breaking down of social structures at a variety of levels in themselves and between them. Local structures absorbed into an overarching hierarchy may have been more easily detached from it. If one polity was destroyed, and there is no need to see the destruction and utter failure of the polity necessarily as a conscious desire of the attackers, whether by a neighbour or by competing groups within it, this would have affected the situation in other areas. Any reactions to prevent such a situation in other polities, either by leading groups attempting to increase control, exterminate rivals or any number of other possible actions, could equally have fomented further antagonism thus precipitating problems that may not otherwise have arisen.

Such a situation need not necessarily have been present in all areas of Greece. In Corinthia, Morgan (1999, 365-366) has argued against both invasion and implicitly warfare, suggesting that there is ‘no reason to assume anything other than a very gradual and peaceful transformation of community life’ and Corinth ‘gained in size and importance during LHIIIIC’. However, even areas that were unaffected or uninvolved directly by warfare between palatial centres or internal problems within them, would have been affected by the general changes within the Mycenaean region as a whole.

Certainly, the merits of this hypothesis rest in the active role given to participants, who engage in realistic and
historically well-attested behaviours. It accepts a more dynamic view of societies as venues for social action, cooperation and competition between groups and individuals. Perhaps, in the way that collapse could occur accidentally from such events, it also deals with the motivation so often lacking in generic theories of invasion, and migration or barbarians. Those competing for power or influence may not have set out to destroy their own world on purpose and likely would not have expected it as a consequence of their actions, even though these actions may have disrupted the very foundations of their own society. These active elements of the hypothesis could easily have combined with other problems to create a very different postpalatial world, yet one inextricably linked to its palatial predecessor.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the major theories that have been used to explain the collapse of Mycenaean palatial culture, yet it remains impossible to prove that any single one of them is correct. It might be suggested that monocausal explanations are inherently unlikely, and indeed this largely reflects current views of collapse. Shelmerdine (2001a, 376) notes that ‘it is improbable that all these phenomena, at all sites, could have had a single cause. Indeed many now agree that a combination of factors must have been at work.’ The four most recent summaries (Deger-Jalkotzy 2008; Hall 2007, 51-55; Bennet 2006, 209; Dickinson 2006a, 43-56) follow this reasoning and all suggest a degree of scholarly consensus that represents valid progress in understanding the Mycenaean collapse (see Table 3.2).

Significantly, these works reject migration from both the archaeological perspective and the use of Greek traditions. Rather than seeking to reconcile these two distinct categories of evidence, Greek traditions are appreciated for what they are and what they do and are placed squarely as evidence for how groups much later on perceived themselves, rather than anything to do with actual peoples or events at the end of the LBA (Dickinson 2006a, 51; Hall 2007, 43-51). Although there may be different emphases, for example Hall (2007, 55) stressed the importance of the interlinked economies of the palaces in Greece and between these and the Near East while Dickinson (2006a, 55, 56) stresses the likelihood of inter-palatial and internal conflict, they both agree that many factors could have played a role in triggering events or making a situation worse, and that a variety of individual local or regional scenarios are possible.

Deger-Jalkotzy (2008) also presents a fairly neutral summary of theories, but follows the view of a period of anxiety caused by human aggressors, the reactions to which sparked economic strain and collapse (system collapse) with other factors also potentially involved. She suggests though (2008, 391) that the system collapse theory cannot explain the physical destructions of the palaces (as with Sherratt’s economic theory, discussed above) or the destructions in non-palace areas. However, one caveat should be that non-palace areas and centres were linked to, if not necessarily controlled by palaces, as Eder (2007) has shown, which suggests that any system collapse may also have affected them in various ways. Her suggestion remains plausible in itself, but her argument is based on a view of a heavily centralised palace system, massive overpopulation and agricultural overexploitation, all of which are contentious.

The collapse of the palatial societies is best explained as a complex set of interlinked processes and events that occurred over a period of perhaps three or more decades. It reflected the internal structure of palace societies and their relationships with hinterlands and local elites as well as with non-palatial parts of Greece, the central Mediterranean and the Near East. Palace societies can be expected to have been competitive both internally and between themselves and it is not unlikely that this was expressed in warfare and combat; non-palace areas may also have been involved in different ways – as groups in their own right, as allies, enemies, or providers of individual or groups of fighters. Localised environmental factors involving climate or earthquakes, as well as plague or epidemics, could easily have played destabilising roles. The severity and timing of these will have been significant, since if they coincided with other problems their individual effects could have been increased, with different final outcomes possible at different times; collapse may not have been inevitable. Since the palace-based societies seem to have been dependent on overseas links, disruption of these links, either through actions far away or through competition for resources at home would have reduced the ability to maintain society in the same way and would naturally have resulted in restructuring and change. Seen in combination, the physical destruction of any palace in such circumstances would make it unlikely that it could have been rebuilt in the same way. The physical destructions and abandonments that mark the collapse simultaneously make clear and obscure the changing social relationships in Greece at the end of the palace period and into the postpalatial period. They show us the results of a problem but not the problem itself. The failure to rebuild the palaces and carry on as before suggests both rejection and inability, which identifies social and ideological, as well as economic and organisational changes. Meanwhile, transformations in non-palatial Greece, which did not have palaces to collapse, indicate the wide effect of these changes. It is often suggested that these regions benefited from the demise of the palaces, but the increasing importance in the postpalatial period of regions that had not had palace societies, or had been peripheral to them, may in itself suggest a possible cause of the collapse that only becomes visible later.
Table 3.1 Evidence for Earthquakes at Mycenae in LHIIIB and LHIIIC (after Nur and Cline 2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Structural deformations/ debris</th>
<th>Fire damage</th>
<th>Skeletons</th>
<th>Reconstruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cult Centre</td>
<td>LHIIIB2</td>
<td>Bulging of walls near entrance to the shrine with idols; fallen roof slates</td>
<td>Yes; No</td>
<td>New wall built over original; original doors walled up and new doors and windows made; reinforcement of wall in nearby room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cult Centre</td>
<td>Later LHIIIB/early LHIIIC</td>
<td>Destruction and subsequent fire burning walls</td>
<td>Yes; intense fire</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South House on the Citadel</td>
<td>LHIIIb</td>
<td>Building collapsed; south-east corner of Room 8 shifted off stone socle</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-west House on the Citadel</td>
<td>LHIIIb</td>
<td>North and south walls of Room 2 collapsed; large pieces of fallen plaster</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – crushed under burned debris of collapsed north wall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House room north of the Citadel (Plakes)</td>
<td>LHIIIb2 c.1250</td>
<td>Tilted and collapsed walls</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes – 3 adults and a child crushed under fallen stones in the basement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panagia House I</td>
<td>LHIIIb2 c.1250</td>
<td>Collapsed doorway; south wall of Room 2 leaning outward to south; stones and rubble debris including a chimney pot and smashed vessels</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some walls strengthened and renewed while others abandoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panagia House II</td>
<td>LHIIIb2 c.1250</td>
<td>Wall between Rooms 11 and 12 skewed with north and central sections buckled and shifted off foundations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panagia House III</td>
<td>LHIIIb2 c.1250</td>
<td>Damage weakening house</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some walls buttressed and reinforced, new walls added and a doorway blocked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Likely factors involved in the collapse, according to recent publications. Sources: after Deger-Jalkotzy 2008; Hall 2007, 51-55; Bennet 2006, 209; Dickinson 2006a, 43-56.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dickinson</th>
<th>Bennet</th>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>Deger-Jalkotzy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal warfare/conflict</td>
<td>Plausible factor, leading to dismantling of states and instability</td>
<td>Local phenomena directed against the palatial centres</td>
<td>Fail to explain widespread nature of disaster in palatial and non-palatial areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Possible – may involve competition. Also links between Near East and Aegean</td>
<td>Importance of long-distance trade in elite self-definition – disturbances in east would have affected Aegean</td>
<td>Links between palaces themselves and Near East were vital</td>
<td>Overspecialisation and centralisation – lack of ability to cope with problems: destructions, massive population increase, supporting huge labour force for building projects. Possible problems with overseas trade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System collapse</td>
<td>Cumulative effect of disturbances, perhaps from local to regional</td>
<td>Cause and result, explains widespread nature of collapse</td>
<td>Explains failure of palace system, but not physical destructions or destructions in non-palatial areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raiders, pirates and others</td>
<td>Instability in Near East, though Sea Peoples dubious. Raiding and some seizure of territory could have taken place</td>
<td>Effects on trade routes and sites, but not the same as Egyptian Sea Peoples</td>
<td>Sea Peoples rejected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthquakes</td>
<td>Catalyst for trouble or exacerbated existing situation</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td>Could have affected storage and otherwise caused problems, vulnerability and demoralisation</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate and famine</td>
<td>Could have led to civil disturbances and conflict, not universal but perhaps in areas such as Messenia it would explain depopulation (though Linear B suggests no agricultural problem)</td>
<td>Possibly – would have been a destabilising factor</td>
<td>Could have been present as a trigger, or an extra problem</td>
<td>Possibly – would have exacerbated palaces economic problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plague</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection of (‘Dorian’ and other) migration theory</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. THE PROCESSES OF COLLAPSE

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss some of the processes at work in other ancient societies that experienced collapses, in order to suggest by analogy the likelihood that similar processes were at work in the Mycenaean collapse. While Torelli (2000) notes that ‘comparisons between cultures which are not themselves in contact are of uncertain significance and debatable value’, he was concerned with interpreting figurative expressions, which may be expected to be laden with meaning unique to the cultures that produced them. Where instances of human interaction, the basis of all societies, are the focus, such comparisons are likely to be more useful, as Scarre (1994, 75) observes, ‘some aspects of past human behaviour are naturally much more accessible to us than others.’ It is altogether appropriate that, in the absence of texts, analogy can and should be used ‘to stimulate your imagination’ (Hawkes 1954, quoted in Scarre 1994, 75) even if it cannot be expected to provide proof of anything. As has been seen in the preceding chapters, incontrovertible proof and total consensus in archaeology are perhaps unachievable goals.

A non-specialist, however, runs the risk of accepting conclusions in secondary sources that may be controversial or disputed, something for which Tainter (1988) and others have been criticised. But what must be stressed here is that it is the social process and interactions that are the main concern, rather than the specific historical detail or conclusions about the ultimate causes of individual collapses. In order to avoid the criticisms levelled at others for such syntheses, an effort has been made to make use of the most recent and authoritative research, some of which was introduced in chapter 2. Furthermore, there is no attempt to force this evidence into a single general explanation of the cause of collapse, rather the aim is to highlight the kind of problems that may have faced the Mycenaean palace states and been potential factors in their collapse.

This approach is necessary because of the difficulties observed in chapter 2, of applying any generic collapse theory to specific examples of collapse, and in chapter 3, of understanding the exact causes and process involved in the Mycenaean collapse. In fact, so little is known for certain of the operations of Mycenaean palace societies that these analogies can also prove useful for developing a deeper understanding of their dynamic nature. The three collapses chosen for discussion are those of the Hittites, the Classic Maya (hereafter Maya) and the Western Roman Empire. As outlined in the introduction and chapter 2, these have not been chosen for direct similarities to Mycenaean Greece either in material or non-material culture, and an obvious difference between Mycenaean palatial societies and the Hittites and Romans is the sheer scale involved. This is no necessary drawback in considering essentially human social and political relationships. A major difference between our understanding of Mycenae society and its collapse, and of these societies and their collapses lies in the textual evidence they have left, which allows us to observe actual events and processes that may have been contributory factors to their collapse and fragmentation, features which can only be guessed at in the Mycenaean context.

The Hittites

The Hittite kingdom developed in the centre of the Anatolian plateau, in the Land of Hatti, early in the seventeenth century (Bryce 2002, 8-9; Figure 4.1).22 In the course of some five centuries an empire was created covering much of Anatolia to northern Syria and western Mesopotamia and extending south to the Mediterranean and perhaps sometimes to Cyprus. In the west, its influence extended towards the Aegean, especially after the destruction of Arzawa by Mursili II in the period equivalent to Mycenaean LHIIIA2, and some contact between Mycenaens and Hittites at a variety of levels and in a variety of contexts is likely, or if Ahhiyawa is accepted as a Mycenaean kingdom is certain (Mountjoy 1998; Bryce 2002, 257-261; Niemeier 1998, 41-43; Niemeier 1999 and 2005), although the Hittites relations with other Great Kingdoms to the east and south were more significant, at least in terms of international prestige (Bryce 2002, 9). These international relationships often had both political and military aspects.

The kingdom was ruled by a royal dynasty, and kings who claimed equal status with other Great Kings, who were in contact and rivalry with each other. It was inhabited by many different population groups and was multi-lingual and multi-ethnic (Bryce 2002, 252). Although there were universal laws and royal officials, many areas were governed by traditional laws and practices, and the emphasis was ‘on local communities becoming as self-regulatory as possible, with less and less involvement by the central authority of the state’ (Bryce 2002, 39). Like the Mycenaean palace societies, the Hittite kingdom collapsed c.1200 during the reign of the last king Suppliliumia II (1207 - ?) and many similar reasons for this have been suggested (Bryce 1998, 367-391).

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22 Bryce (1998) is accepted by Hope Simpson (2003, 204) as the current reference work on the Hittites, although inevitably some specific historical points remain controversial.
The Hittite kingdom offers several advantages for the study of its collapse over that of the Mycenaean palace societies, although any interpretation remains far from straightforward, and of course the Hittite kingdom existed on a far grander scale than any of the Mycenaean polities (Bryce 1998, 374-379). Much more about its internal structure and external relations, as well as specific events, is known from the many tablets, whole and fragmentary, excavated at the capital Hattusa, as well as at various administrative centres, and these form the main source for Hittite history (Bryce 1998, 416-417). These archives contain a wealth of information of different kinds. The archive at Maşat, for example, is a record of correspondence between the kings and local officials much of it concerning dealings with the Kaska (Bryce 1998, 417 n.6). Also the tablets include: annalistic records relating the achievements of the kings who composed them, decrees, political correspondence, treaties between kings and their foreign counterparts or vassal rulers, administrative texts, edicts, a collection of laws, ritual and festival texts, and a number of mythological and literary texts (Bryce 1998, 424).

A further source of information comes from the royal correspondence in the fourteenth century Amarna Letters (Moran 1992), and the later letters between the courts of Hattusili III and Ramesses II in the thirteenth century (Bryce 1998, 425). The prominence of texts over archaeology in Hittite studies is understandable, since the nature of the documentary evidence allows the writing of both narrative political history (eg Bryce 2002) and social history (eg Bryce 1998), although the two kinds of evidence can be successfully combined (Macqueen 1986). While they can never be more than analogy, the experiences recorded by the texts, which show the trials and tribulations of a LBA kingdom, are extremely suggestive for filling in the gaps that exist between the very limited Linear B records and Mycenaean material culture, since they show a range of contemporary political and social realities. These will be explored thematically and related to the Mycenaean situation.

Barbarians and vassals
As noted in chapters 2 and 3, barbarians have played an influential role in general collapse theories, and in theories of Mycenaean collapse, in the guise of Doriains, North Greeks, Sea Peoples, and as raiders, invaders and migrants. They have been held responsible for battles and attacks followed by increased expenditure on defence, destructions, agricultural problems, and the interruption of trade routes. While certainly the evidence for barbarian activity is unclear in the case of the Mycenaeans, the case of the Hittites offers a contemporary reality of a kingdom surrounded by potentially and actually aggressive ‘barbarian’ enemies, only one group of which will be discussed here. In considering the nature of the evidence, and their impact on Hittite activity, it is significant that: ‘although attested historically, the Kaska are virtually unknown archaeologically’ (Matthews 2004, 206).

Throughout its history, the Hittite homeland was threatened by, amongst others, a people called the Kaska, ‘a loose confederation of mountain kingdoms’ or tribes,
located in the Pontic region north of the Hittite homeland (Bryce 1998, 49; see also Matthews 2004). Early on they were noted as attacking northern Anatolian cities involved in trade with Assyrian merchants (Bryce 1998, 64). The Maşat letters also show that the Kaska would attack due to agricultural shortfalls in their own region, caused by plagues of locusts or other adverse conditions (Kuhrt 1995, 257). It is also likely that they sometimes attempted some degree of territorial expansion or consolidation in disputed areas, which may have intensified over time; the landscape has been interpreted as showing the desire for strategic control by the Hittites (Matthews 2004, 205). The threat posed by the Kaska was very real and on several occasions they successfully invaded and occupied Hittite territory even resulting in the effective abandonment of Hattusa as the capital and the relocation of the court south to Tarhuntassa (Bryce 1998, 49: Bryce 2002, 17-18, 232-233). The Hittite response was to try create a buffer zone in the north-east and also to engage in regular warfare (Macqueen 1986, 53-54; Bryce 1998, 49; Matthews 2004).

Events during the reign of Mursilis II (c.1321-1295) show the persistent threat they represented. On his accession, the Kaska had already been attacking Hittite territory and the death of the governor sent to deal with them intensified the crisis already caused by the death of Arnuwanda II (Bryce 1998, 207). For the first two years of his reign, Mursilis fought punitive campaigns against the Kaska before having to turn his attention to problems elsewhere (Bryce 1998, 209). In the fifth year of his reign he was forced to deal with their continuing aggression and their attack on Hattusa itself in the most ruthless of ways. He apparently attacked and conquered the Kasaka land of Ziharriya, slaughtered the population and burned its city (Bryce 1998, 215). Such campaigns took up much of the second half of Mursilis’s reign (Bryce 1998, 234).

It is likely the Kaska were difficult for the Hittites to deal with for a variety of reasons, not least their proximity and the vulnerability of the northern region to attack from Kaska regions (Bryce 1998, 49). Even following defeat in battle, the Kaska were difficult to integrate as subjects because of the ‘absence of any clear coherent political structure’ similar to the Hittites themselves or other peoples they were aware of, which meant that ‘the Hittites had no firm foundation on which to attempt to build a vassal state system in the Kaska region’ (Bryce 1998, 235); the Kaska of course may also not have desired incorporation. Treaties between the Hittites and Kaska involved communities of Kaska, rather than individual leaders of states, and were therefore less effective (Kuhrt 1995, 257).

The Kaska may, from the perspective of the Hittite upper elite, have lacked organisation and perhaps formal or institutionalised leadership, but their society must also be regarded as dynamic, perhaps more so in response to the presence of the Hittite state. There evidently were leaders among Kaska groups sometimes, perhaps ‘big men’, and they seem to have acted in concert. Attempts may have been made opportunistically by individuals to increase their own power and influence, and one Kaska chief, Pihhuniya, was noted by Mursili II as ruling ‘in the manner of a king’ (Bryce 1998, 215; Kuhrt 1995, 257-258). In fact, he was able to incorporate the Upper Land, north-east of the Hittite homeland, into Kaska territory.

The Hittites also attempted to repopulate areas devasted by constant war in order to increase the effectiveness of the buffer zone, although this proved ineffective (Bryce 1998, 243). It incidentally shows the potential effect of prolonged conflict on population. There were also peaceful and friendly contacts also between the Hittites and Kaska, although these may be neglected by texts which focus more on conflict; some Kaska could be recognised as allies, even fighting alongside Hittites at Kadesh, and playing a role in civil wars between members of the royal household (Matthews 2004, 206). However, even the allied Kaska, though granted some grazing rights and access to Hittite territory, were banned from settling in Hittite towns (Bryce 1998, 272), and this policy is likely to have created some residual resentment and tension, as the denial of equal rights to Roman allies did in the second and first centuries.

In the reign of Tudhaliya IV (c.1237-1209), shortly before the collapse of the Hittite kingdom, the Kaska and others remained a serious military threat (Bryce 1998, 337). The subsequent short-lived kings Arnuwanda III and Suppiluliuma II probably continued to face this threat and Bryce (1998, 379) has suggested that: 

However one explains the weakened state which led to its destruction – internal political instability – severely depleted defence capabilities – communication networks and supply lines in disarray – critical shortages of food and other resources – the royal capital perhaps fell victim, finally and irretrievably, to an enemy who had plagued the Hittites from almost the beginning of their history, an enemy over whom they had triumphed, but from whose menace they had never been completely secure.

The Kaska show the capability of neighbouring, but less centrally organised, peoples to defeat a complex Late Bronze Age state with an army, destroy the capital of a powerful and extensive empire, displace its royal court for considerable periods, annex part of its territory, and pose a long-term threat that diverted both attention and resources from other matters. The Linear B records are mute in terms of recording such enemies in Mycenaean Greece, but at least one piece of evidence could suggest that barbarians and palatial forces might have fought, although it is open to several interpretations, which prevents a definite conclusion being reached.

The Pylos ‘Battle Fresco’ was mentioned in chapter 3, and appears to show palace warriors confronting
skin-clad enemies near a river (Davis and Bennet 1999). Some interpret the scene as depicting perhaps the foundation myth of Pylos or another mythical scene, but it may equally represent a historic or pseudo-historical episode or theme, with enemies depicted in a way that suited the palace ideology, creating a clear distinction in identity between palace people and ‘others’. The status of the female archer, even if divine (Brecoulaki 2008), need not count against this interpretation, for in many cultures including Greek gods may appear alongside or against mortals in combat. A similarly themed fresco may also have been present at Mycenae (Hood 1978, 80). Such characterisations of the other are familiar themes in self-definition and need not be veristic representations, whether they represent historical or pseudo-historical episodes or not.

Yalouris (1989, cited in Torelli 2000) has identified the battle scene from Pylos with one from the Iliad (7.133-137), but even despite the major problem of accepting that the Homeric poems recall any specific events from the LBA, the enemy being fought by the Pylians, or at least their leader Ereuthalion, wore armour, not a skin. While it may be doubted that any inhabitants of Greece would be wearing skins to battle in the late palatial period, or that there were particularly warlike or barbarian people in Greece, even in non-palatial areas, some small scale local raiding ‘from the rougher or poorer parts of the Greek mainland’ or conflict could have taken place (Dickinson 2006a, 48, 50).

Vassals also played a destabilising role in Hittite affairs but at the same time were part of the process of Hittite expansion and attempts at consolidation (Kuhrt 1995, 266-270). Vassalage was imposed by Hittite kings through treaties with individual rulers that included military and tribute obligations and often marriage alliance with a Hittite princess, in which she was to be accorded a higher status than other wives and her children were to succeed to the throne (Bryce 1998, 51). Treaties sought to ensure that vassals were loyal to the Hittite king and forbade them from concluding treaties or having military or political dealings with other rulers. This was especially important in attempting to forestall coalitions against the Hittites themselves and could offer some, usually temporary, stability (Bryce 1998, 52). Nevertheless, ‘Hittite kings were often plagued by treacherous behaviour from disloyal vassal rulers and by rebellions in vassal states which overthrew their pro-Hittite rulers’ (Bryce 1998, 53). The independence of the southern region of Tarhuntassa sometime during the reign of Tudhaliya IV, where for some time the Hittite capital had been located, and loss of control of the port of Ura, where grain shipments were probably received, may have proved particularly damaging (Bryce 1998, 364). Needless to say, any particularly inopportune combination of uprisings by vassals along with attacks by the Kaska and others could prove extremely difficult to deal with, even more so if other negative factors were also present.

Although all of the Mycenaean palace states were smaller enterprises than the Hittite state, their process of expansion into overarching power structures likely involved the incorporation of pre-existing local elites, and in some cases this may have had similarities with vassalage. When Pylos expanded its influence into eastern Messenia, which became the Further Province (Beyond-Aigaleon), it seems to have done so at the expense of the local centre of Leuktron (Bennet 1995). Leuktron may originally have expanded in parallel with Pylos, as a local elite/royal centre in its own right, only later to become subordinate to Pylos, but it is possible that there may have been some sort of vassal relationship between them. Other palaces may also have had vassal-type relationships with local centres. As mentioned in chapter 1, Thebes appears to have had influence over southern Euboea and perhaps even the island of Aegina. This need not have involved direct rule from the palace, but may have been more like a vassal relationship, with a high degree of local autonomy and duties to fulfil specific obligations to the centre. Although our understanding of the relationship between prominent sites within the Argolid is unclear, if this region, or part of it, did seek control or influence over some the Aegean islands, this may also have been similar in nature, relying on local social structures and people, and personal relationships. At any rate, interrelations between elites whether involving vassalage, alliance or more direct incorporation could have been as problematic for the Mycenaean palace states as they were for the Hittites, and any concentration of military forces away from the centre could have been dangerous, leaving them vulnerable, as was the case for Hattusa.

Plague and famine
The texts reveal some evidence for factors that might otherwise remain invisible from an archaeological perspective: occurrences of plague and the possibility of famine. A virulent plague is known to have occurred beginning in the last years of Suppiluliuma I (c.1344-1322) and to have continued well into the reign of Mursili II (Bryce 1998, 223). Although it is difficult to ascertain the damage caused by the plague, or its distribution, Mursili’s plague prayer notes widespread depopulation and some of its effects, particularly on agriculture and production connected to the practice of cult, a theme which may be expected to have been of interest to the gods. There would likely have been effects outside these spheres, and Amarna Letter 35, from the king of Alashiya, similarly connects the death of copper smiths and reduced production with plague (Moran 1992, 107). It is significant that in Mursili’s prayer, plague is also linked with hostility from surrounding areas:

The Land of Hatti, all of it, is dying; so that no one prepares sacrificial loaves and libations for you. The ploughmen who used to work the fields of the god
are dead... Man has lost his wits, and there is nothing that we do aright... O gods, take pity on the Land of Hatti! On the one hand it is afflicted with a plague, on the other it is afflicted with hostility... Now all the surrounding countries have begun to attack the Land of Hatti (Bryce 1998, 224).

This plague may have been directly responsible for the death of Mursili’s brother and predecessor, Arnuwanda II, their father Suppiluliuma I, and possibly the governor sent by Arnuwanda to deal with the Kaska (Bryce 1998, 207). Although there is no mention of any plague affecting the Hittites c.1200, it must be remembered that plague may reoccur over long periods of time and that the record provided by the tablets is not complete. The archives at Hattusa ‘must have suffered substantial damage and disruption’ due to attacks and the relocation of the capital, as well as removal and rebuilding on site (Bryce 1998, 417-418). Any plague that may have affected one or other of the Mycenaean palace states could similarly have laid them open to serious vulnerability from others, perhaps killing key figures within the state, reducing military capability, as well as disrupting agriculture and production, and affecting society in general, - the psychological and social effects should not be underestimated. Although it must equally be noted that the plague that affected Athens in 430, which does not appear to have spread widely in Greece, did not lead immediately, nor directly, to the loss of the Peloponnesian war nor to the inability of Athens to fight, nor did it lead to the collapse of Athens as a state (Kagan 2003, 78-80, 487; JACT 1984, 28-29).

An increasing concern of the Hittite kings with securing grain from Egypt and Canaan has also been noted from the middle of the thirteenth century, leading some to suggest that the land of Hatti was suffering from long term or regular famine, perhaps due to drought or climatic factors, although human interference is an equally likely cause (Bryce 1998, 356, 375). In a letter to Ramesses II, the Hittite queen Pudehepa referred to a lack of grain in her lands (Bryce 1998, 356 n.115). A Hittite prince was sent to Egypt to organise what Bryce suggests were regular imports from Egypt which must have come up the Levantine coast to Ugarit and thence to the port of Ura in Tarhuntassa (Bryce 1998, 356-357). It is difficult to ascertain how dependent on these shipments the Hittites became, for it seems unlikely that the population as a whole could have been supplied in this way. It may be more likely that these shipments were directly connected with the royal family either for their upkeep or for use as disbursements in some way. However, texts from the reign of Tudhaliya IV continue to refer to the importance of imports and the existence of shipments from Egypt ‘to keep alive the land of Hatti’ were also referred to by Merneptah (Bryce 1998, 365). One shipment of grain from Mukis, delayed in Ugarit owing to the lack of a ship and crew, was referred to in a letter to the Ugaritic king as ‘a matter of life and death’, although the urgency may be exaggerated (Bryce 1998, 365). Such imports were vulnerable to disruption at any stage on their journey and reliance on them for any purpose will have been a serious risk. When control over the port of Ura in Tarhuntassa was lost, Tudhaliya IV and his successors may have been placed in particular jeopardy (Bryce 1998, 364).

Although as in Greece there is a lack of positive evidence for any specific unusual drought, problems with agricultural production could have occurred for many reasons, including lack of human resources due to plague or war, while internecine warfare and raiding may have made some lands unfarmable, and all of these were problems that affected the Hittites (Bryce 1998, 375). Shortage of food and security of supply was of concern at the highest levels and a hungry populace would have provided a real threat to stability if not dealt with (Dickinson 2006a, 55; Levick 1990, 109-110). While it is uncertain that the Mycenaean palace societies traded with or relied on each other in terms of basic subsistence foods, any localised problem could have encouraged raiding of neighbouring areas or attempts at territorial expansion to secure agricultural land. Occurrences of plague and food shortages could certainly have been destabilising factors for the Mycenaean palace societies and were ones that existed at the same time in neighbouring regions.

**Divided loyalties**

Vassalage and its attendant difficulties have been discussed above, but another potential problem faced by the Hittites was that of the royal family itself, and the factions and influential families and figures around it. Even in its earliest days, the issue of succession was to prove a problem with significant ramifications for the unity, integrity and stability of the Hittite kingdom. The first instance of this is instructive, since it sets a model for similar events that occurred throughout the history of the kingdom.

The first Hittite king, Labarna (c.? – 1650), attempted to appoint his son and presumed heir, Labarna, as governor of Sanahuitta, a newly conquered city, but this appointment was disputed by the king’s other sons, ‘his servants and the great men’ and never took place (Bryce 1998, 71-72). Instead, one Papadilmah was appointed, Sanahuitta rebelled and the young Labarna may not have survived. The next king, Hattusili I (c.1650-1620), attacked Sanahuitta but failed to topple the rebel regime or recapture the city (Bryce 1998, 74). Hattusili also appointed his sons as governors of conquered territories but he noted that ‘until now no member of my family has obeyed my will’ (Bryce 1998, 90). Two of his sons had rebelled against him, one encouraged by the local inhabitants, but both appear to have been put down (Bryce 1998, 90). Another rebellion occurred at Hattusa, involving nobles and the king’s daughter, who had male children. She ‘made Hattusa and the court disloyal; and the noblemen and my own courtiers opposed me’ (Bryce 1998, 90). Hattusili, having no worthy sons, was forced to adopt his nephew as his son and heir, but this was soon
reversed as the nephew appears to have been overly influenced by his mother and family and his kingship threatened further violence and disruption. At last he appointed his grandson Mursili as heir (Bryce 1998, 94).

Thus there was amongst the Hittite royal family and the court and household which formed the immediate environment of the king, as in so many other court situations, a predisposition to intrigue and to negotiate and renegotiate power relations at the heart of the kingdom (Bryce 2002, 21-27; see Spawforth 2007 on courts in ancient monarchies). Such activities were prime concerns of monarchs, and had the potential to destabilise and divide the kingdom at any time; furthermore they show the importance of personal and individual motivation within historical events and situations.

The mid-thirteenth century saw a struggle for power between Urhi-Tesub and his uncle, later Hattusili III, which divided the loyalties of subjects and vassals alike (Bryce 1998, 284-288). In Hattusa itself, this civil war may have led to looting and destruction in violent clashes between opposing sides (Bryce 1998, 289). Hattusili also tried to ensure that only his descendants, not those of Urhi-Tesub, could inherit the throne. These problems of legitimacy and loyalty plagued Hattusili’s heir, Tudhaliya IV, in the late thirteenth century, and his statement is notable and worth quoting at length, for expressing a concern that has faced many dynasties:

> My Sun has many brothers and there are many sons of his father. The Land of Hatti is full of the royal line: in Hatti the descendants of Suppiluliuma, the descendants of Mursili, the descendants of Muwatalli, the descendants of Hattusili are very numerous. With regard to kingship, you must acknowledge no other person (but me, Tudhaliya), and protect only the grandson and great grandson and descendants of Tudhaliya. And if at any time (?) evil is done to My Sun – (for) My Sun has many brothers – and someone approaches another person and speaks thus: ‘Whoever we select for ourselves need not even be a son of our lord!’ – these words must not be (permitted). With regard to kingship, you must protect only My Sun and the descendants of My Sun. You must approach no other person (Bryce 1998, 332).

However, there is some evidence that there was another coup, in which Tudhaliya’s cousin, Kurunta, whom he had recognised as king of Tarhuntassa, became king for a short time in Hattusa and this probably led to the loss of Tarhuntassa, which became hostile to the Hittites (Bryce 1998, 335, 354-355). The last king, Suppiluliuma II, son of Tudhaliya IV, also faced serious discord on his accession, as had his brother Arnuwanda III, who ruled for only a year (Bryce 1998, 361). This may well have been linked with continuing disagreement over which branch of the royal family should have ruled (Bryce 1998, 362). However, in the midst of these internal problems, he was faced with widespread disobedience from vassals and, uniquely, the divorce of a Hittite princess by the son of the king of Ugarit (Bryce 1998, 363). This may indicate the diminished respect and authority the Hittite king could command at this point.

Dynastic intrigue and opportunism was ever present throughout the history of the Hittite kingdom and this involved members of the royal family and the nobility whose support was necessary for any king (Bryce 1998, 92). If we assume that the wanaktes of the palatial kingdoms were kings in a similar sense, and members of ruling dynasties, then it is likely that they faced similar problems. Although we know nothing of their marriage or succession arrangements, it could be expected that, over time, the number of royal descendants would increase, and that this might cause tensions between competing groups who could use these figures as a focus of intrigue. Accepting Ahhiyawa as a Mycenaean kingdom, it seems that the king’s brother Tawagalawas seems to have had responsibility in the eastern Aegean islands and coastal Asia Minor (Bryce 1998, 321), although these areas were largely autonomous (Gurney 1990, 40-41). Whether Tawagalawas acted according to the wishes of his king and brother, or acted opportunistically or in his own interests, or a combination of the two, must remain speculation, but at least it provides a context in which there was a potential for intrigue and the existence of different power bases within a kingdom. Mycenaean kings may have similarly used family members to rule particular areas or to undertake campaigns or expeditions. While this could be an effective method of rule and maintaining the dominance of one family, there were no foolproof ways for a king to command the loyalty of his own family, let alone other nobles or subjects surrounding them, and the following description of the problems that faced Hattusili I are generally applicable: ‘without doubt his regular absences on military campaigns exacerbated the political problems he faced at home, problems which led to faction, strife, rebellion, and great loss of life and property’ (Bryce 1998, 99).

A push too far and the failure of strong central leadership?

The above discussions set in context the problems encountered in maintaining the integrity and existence of the Hittite kingdom. It must be said that it successfully survived many extremely serious situations, but past survival was no guarantee of future success and the kingdom of Tudhaliya IV towards the end of the thirteenth century has been characterised as ‘a kingdom coming under mounting pressures’ (Bryce 1998, 358), though we should be cautious of associating these pressures with any notion of decline. On top of dynastic issues, military threats existed on all sides of the kingdom, yet apparently Tudhaliya chose to engage his forces on Alashiya (Steel 2004, 185-186), and claimed to have made it tributary and even to have seized its royal
Suppiluliuma II is later recorded as successfully fighting greater problems than a solution in the long run. Elsewhere, in fact, if this happened it may have posed a serious threat, resources and could easily have encouraged problems elsewhere. In fact, if this happened it may have posed a greater problem than a solution in the long run.

Suppiluliuma II is later recorded as successfully fighting three naval battles against Alashiya and one land battle, which Bryce also suggests reflect a concern with supply routes (Bryce 1998, 365-366). Who exactly these enemies were is not known and other evidence combines to provide a confused picture (Knapp 2008, 322ff.). Since the Hittites are not known to have had a navy, and they had lost their province of Tarhuntassa and its port of Ura, it is supposed that Ugarit provided their naval capacity (Bryce 1998, 366). Whatever problems may have been affecting the relationship between Ugarit and Suppiluliuma, he was evidently still able to count on their aid, since a letter from the last king of Ugarit in response to a request for aid from the king of Alashiya notes that ‘all my troops and chariots (?) are in the Land of Hatti, and all my ships are in the Land of Lukka’ (Bryce 1998, 367). Suppiluliuma is also recorded as having conquered and annexed many western lands, including the Lukka Lands, as well as Tarhuntassa, although if this was the case, it does not seem to have lasted (Bryce 1998, 364).

The exact nature of Mycenaean political and military involvement in the eastern Aegean and western Asia Minor is unclear, although some activity seems likely (Niemeier 1999) and the Ahhiyawan Tawagalawa was evidently involved in activities to do with the Lukka Lands and thus into contact with the Hittites (Bryce 1998, 321). It is quite possible that one or other Mycenaean kingdoms could have become equally entangled in too many, too distant or too difficult projects, and that this led to a failure at the centre, resulting in fragmentation of the polity. Local powers and other palace states would have sought to capitalise on such events. This is perhaps a likely enough scenario even in the mainland and Aegean area itself, without necessarily having to accept a Mycenaean answer to the Ahhiyyawa question.

Despite the pressures evident prior to the collapse of the Hittite kingdom, Tudhaliya IV and Suppiluliuma II were nonetheless able to mobilise significant resources both for construction at Hattusa and for military campaigning, and it would be difficult to suggest that a collapse was predictable or inevitable even under these strained circumstances, although the later texts may be more optimistic than truthful in their content (Bryce 2004, 254-256). This is cautionary for those who seek to identify decline or to see it as a necessary preamble to collapse. As Bryce notes of Tudhaliya IV: ‘this king has left some enduring tangible monuments to his reign – more enduring than those left by the kings who reigned in what might be regarded as the peak periods of Hittite power’ (Bryce 1998, 359). While expenditure on monumentality has been linked with the collapse of the Hittites and the Mycenaean palace societies, there is no simple equation between excessive expenditure and collapse. What it suggests is that there is no clear link between the appearance of monumental architecture and long or even short-term stability, but equally there is no clear indication that the creation of monumental architecture must lead to collapse from over-expense. In fact, in terms of Mycenaean, Maya, and Egyptian monumental architecture, recent studies of labour requirements show that these need by no means need have placed any undue or unusual pressure on society (Loader 1998, 65-73; Evans 2004, 340-341; Manley 1996, 28). It can be suspected though that ancient kingdoms were perhaps less stable than their most enduring and impressive monuments suggest, and that it was rather the personal relationships, prestige and networks of obligation that were necessary to mobilise and command resources; when these relationships were fractured, such projects were no longer possible.

**Continuities**

It seems likely that circumstances combined to make the long-term survival of the Hittite kingdom extremely unlikely, despite the fact that it had managed to survive for so long. Although the Hittite kingdom as it had existed disappeared along with Suppiluliuma, with Hattusa and other sites destroyed and abandoned, the destructions were limited to particular areas and abandonment was more prevalent; Bittel (quoted in Bryce 1998, 381-382) stated that ‘though politically the attack by its neighbours was disastrous for Hatti, the loss of life must not be exaggerated.’ Mobility of population rather than ‘widespread destruction and massacre’ seems to have followed the collapse. Regions and peoples peripheral to the Hittites, such as the Lukka continued to develop through to the classical period, retaining some elements of LBA culture in the names of their gods and language (Bryce 1998, 382). Tarhuntassa also may have continued to exist as a kingdom and several areas show continuity and ‘a stable population’ indicated by the retention of LBA place names (Bryce 1998, 383). It is even possible that ‘Great Kings’ named Mursili and his son Hartapu continued to rule in Tarhuntassa, and that these were descendants of Kurunta, as may be suggested by several inscriptions which appear datable to just after the fall of Hattusa, or that the Mursili was in fact Urhi-Tesub and Hartapu was his son (Bryce 1998, 386).
A branch of the Hittite royal family also continued to rule for several generations at Carchemish, despite its alleged destruction (along with Hatti, Qode, Arzawa and Alashiya) by the Sea Peoples as recorded by the Egyptians (Bryce 1998, 384). One king, Kuzi-Tesub, who seems to have outlived Suppiluliuma II, adopted the title of ‘Great King’, which may indicate the demise of the main branch of Hittite royalty and that a Hittite kingdom of Carchemish survived the collapse (Bryce 1998, 384; Caubet 2003, 18). His grandsons also ruled as kings in the east and the title was retained by the kings of Carchemish from c.1150-1000, despite reductions in territory (Bryce 1998, 384; Caubet 2003, 18). Bryce (1998, 384) speculates that ‘particularly perhaps the more elite elements of Hittite society, including members of the royal court’ could have settled there and ‘created an environment not unlike that of the palace society at Hattusa.’ Despite this continuity, which persisted in the creation of Hittite style monuments, sculptures and hieroglyphic inscriptions, the kingdom continued to fragment into smaller units and new kingdoms, although the region itself became known as the Land of Hatti (Bryce 1998, 385).

In the Lower Land, south of the Hittite homeland, a much later kingdom of Tabal existed, formed from several smaller states (Bryce 1998, 387). Their traditions show ‘significant continuity of traditions from the Late Bronze Age Hittite world through the succeeding Dark Age down into the first millennium’ (Bryce 1998, 387). Furthermore, the descendants of the Kaska appear to have still been present in the vicinity (Bryce 1998, 387-388). This picture of varied cultural and political continuity and change accords fairly well with that of the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces and the transformation of Greece over subsequent centuries.

The Classic Maya

Some recent theories to account for the collapse of the Classic Maya were discussed in chapter 2, where it was noted that monocausal explanations had been largely discredited as failing to explain the long and varied pattern of events in different regions. Rather, emphasis is increasingly placed on internal, local and regional events and the interplay of social and environmental factors. Here, after a brief orientation, some specific instances of collapse will be discussed, since they provide likely analogues for events in LBA Greece.

Unlike the Hittites but like the Mycenaeans, the Maya never constituted one unified political body, either a state or an empire. Rather, there existed a Maya civilization or culture zone throughout and to the south and west of the Yucatan Peninsula in a variety of very different regions (Coe 1999, 14-32; Webster 2002, 294; Demarest 2004, 10-12 and Fig. 2.2). While there was a degree of cultural similarity within the zone, there was much variation between individual sites and regions with each of the many polities ‘adapted to the unique features of its natural and social environment’ (Webster 2002, 177).

The Classic period (c. AD 300-900) is defined by the widespread occurrence of distinctive forms of the ancient Maya writing and calendric systems in carved stone texts, as well as polychrome ceramics, corbelled vault or false vault stone architecture, the stela-altar monument complex and the ‘Ajaw complex’ an emphasis on the ‘ideology of divine kingship in art, iconography and politics’ (Demarest 2004, 15-16). The collapse of the Classic Maya involved the ending of ‘divine kingship, along with the elite-run social, political, and administrative hierarchies and economic support systems it entailed’ together with a ‘major change in archaeologically visible aspects of the lowland political and economic system, as well as population levels and distributions’ and this is now chronologically defined as the Terminal Classic (c. AD 750-1050) (Demarest et al. 2004b, 545, 569, 572).

The Maya thus appear, in a general sense, to have had some similarities with the palatial Mycenaeans. In both cultures, independent competing polities existed, linked by a variety of social and economic networks, rivalries and alliances (Demarest 2004, 222-228). They are defined by the existence of particular styles of kingship, ideology and social structure, which were expressed materially through architecture and iconography as well as texts (Webster 2002, 119-136). There were extreme differences between sites: as well as major sites, there were a variety of smaller centres and some areas existed without such organisational systems, which corresponds to a similar variety in Mycenaean Greece (Webster 2002, 163-170; Small 1998 and 1999). Small (1998) in fact has suggested that Mycenaean society may have been similar to Maya society, being based on lineage units or...
individual households, rather than forming a state, and suggests that this can explain the presence of extremely large central sites.

Despite linguistic differences across the region, ‘one prestige language was used everywhere in the inscriptions’ and this facilitated inter-elite relations (Webster 2002, 158). This also seems to be the case for Greece, the Aegean and Linear B (Postgate in Voutsaki and Killen 2001, 160). Another similarity seems to be that long-distance trade networks in prestige-related goods or resources were vital for supporting elites that controlled them, while other trade and production may have been decentralised and not an elite concern (Demarest 2004, 160-164, 173). In the Terminal Classic, these defining features of the Classic Maya were abandoned and transformed at different times for different reasons and in a variety of ways marking a ‘change in the regional manifestation of Classic Maya civilization, particularly political systems and political ideology’ (Demarest et al. 2004b, 546). The rest of this section will examine some specific aspects of the collapse, transformation and continuity that suggest comparison with the collapse in LBA Greece.

Dynasties, alliances and warfare: the collapse in the Petexbatun

The collapse of Classic Maya political systems appears to have occurred earliest in the western Petén region and particularly in the Petexbatun region and systematic research has revealed ‘a clear and consistent, albeit complex, sequence of events’ (Demarest 2004, 249; Figure 4.2 ‘Pasion zone’; Parsell 2002; see also Schele and Freidel 1990, chapter 5, for a detailed text-based account of the complex political events of this period of intensified conflict and empire-building). In AD 648, B’alaj Chan Kawil and his followers established themselves at Dos Pilas (Webster 2002, 275). He may have been the son of a king of Tikal, located some 100km to the north-east (Figure 4.2 Central zone), and probably had ambitions to rule at Tikal itself, since he and his successor used the emblem glyph of Tikal’s kings (Webster 2002, 275). B’alaj Chan Kawil allied himself with Tikal’s great rival, Calakmul, located almost 200km to the north of Dos Pilas (Figure 4.2 North central zone), but following Calakmul’s defeat of Tikal in AD 657 he did not become king in Tikal (Webster 2002, 276). Tikal subsequently attacked Dos Pilas, in AD 672, driving B’alaj Chan Kawil into a five-year exile (Webster 2002, 276). After he returned, relations between Dos Pilas and Calakmul were reinforced by mutual visits: B’alaj Chan Kawil attended the enthronement of Yich’aak K’ak’ in AD 686 and Calakmul nobles are attested at his own court in Dos Pilas (Webster 2002, 276). Calakmul may have used Dos Pilas to increase its influence in the region by assisting Dos Pilas in the conquest of other centres, and the ‘Calakmul alliance’ indeed controlled this area, key to the exchange of prestige goods, until the end of the eighth century (Demarest 2004, 249; Webster 2002, 288-289). However, in AD 695, Calakmul itself was heavily defeated by Tikal, and Dos Pilas ‘remained as the great military power’ of the region, extending its regional influence through warfare, alliance and intermarriage (Demarest 2004, 249). A second dynastic seat was later established at Aguateca (Demarest 2004, 250).

Then, around AD 760/761, Dos Pilas collapsed and several proximate causes are identifiable (Demarest 2004, 251). Dos Pilas itself was attacked, destroyed and largely abandoned, its ritual throne overturned and smashed, by the vassal king of Tamarindito, and foreknowledge of direct military threat is indicated by the rushed fortification of it and nearby sites, using material taken from temples and palaces and the construction of a ‘densely packed siege village’ within the walls (Demarest 2004, 251-254 Figures 10.5-10.8).

However, it seems that the royal family and nobles moved to the much more defensible centre of Aguateca, with its deep gorge to the east and cliffs to the west, and this site too was hastily fortified with 5km of walls (Webster 2002, 277; Demarest 2004, 252-253 Figure 10.7). This site remained in use until around AD 800 before it was abandoned by the 5th Dos Pilas ruler (Webster 2002, 277), but the palace was ritually destroyed, and the elite houses burned and abandonment of household objects suggest attack. What remained of Dos Pilas was also destroyed just after Aguateca (Webster 2002, 277). Again it is likely that the surviving elite moved to other locations with which they were linked.

Between AD 761-830, the Petexbatun region ‘collapsed into a state of endemic warfare’ creating a ‘landscape of fear’ (Demarest 2004, 253). Long distance trade routes and local exchange were interrupted and the population moved to defensible sites and neighbouring regions, as indicated by excavation and survey (Demarest 2004, 253; Webster 2002, 277). This nucleation could have produced agricultural problems through the intensive farming of defensible areas, and some areas of rich soil were themselves palisaded (Demarest 2004, 253-255; Webster 2002, 277). Significant depopulation also occurred (Demarest 2004, 252). There are several likely causes of this situation.

Dos Pilas may have relied heavily on the support of Calakmul, and despite initial successes, could have become increasingly vulnerable following Calakmul’s defeat (Webster 2002, 277). Calakmul in fact remained influential until much later, but seems to have chosen to look north, rather than south after AD 750 (Braswell et al. 2004, 190). It is likely that there were problems with vassals and nearby polities ‘seem to act more independently in the late 8th century’ (Webster 2002, 277). After the destruction of Dos Pilas, it is plausible that Aguateca, Tamarindito, Seibal and La Amelia all competed for regional dominance (Webster 2002, 277). By AD 830, the Petexbatun had only one remaining major centre, Punta de Chimino, located on a peninsula in
Lake Petexbatun and cut off from the mainland by a massive moat; however this site and the remaining hamlets appear to have been gradually abandoned in the ninth century (Demarest 2004, 255). At Punta de Chimino and Seibal, new sculptural and architectural forms, based in older traditions and representations of new costumes and styles, may have ‘been part of an experimentation with new legitimating ideologies’ but even these were eventually abandoned (Demarest 2004, 261).

This collapse seems to have been caused by competition for royal power, inter-elite competition and status rivalry, and the need to acquire (or stop others acquiring) high status goods, thus these stresses ‘were created by the K’uhul Ajaw system itself’ (Demarest 2004, 257). In turn, this led to a situation in which instability and warfare were endemic and evolved ‘into more widespread conflict as the basic infrastructure of the region was disrupted’ (Demarest 2004, 257). These problems at local and regional levels were also linked to the formation and fragmentation of what are sometimes termed ‘galactic polities’, networks of influence that the biggest centres such as Tikal and Calakmul attempted to forge, where rulers might claim some paramount status over other rulers and their wars reflect vast geopolitical conflicts, not mere local squabbling’ (Demarest 2004, 259; Webster 2002, 169). Continuity and new adaptations of older traditions occurred at some sites, following the demise of others, but this did not last (Demarest 2004, 261).

Although the political interrelations and narrative histories of Mycenaean kingdoms cannot be reconstructed, it may be that, as polities of different levels, some sought to dominate others, in a similar way to the galactic polities of the Maya, and this could have fostered rivalries and intense military competition between and in different sites and regions. It is well know that armies of classical times could move about Greece and fight at some distance from their homes and the same mobility and reach could be expected in the LBA. Some regions, like the Argolid, with a dense concentration of important sites, could have been particularly vulnerable to conflict and competition, but equally Orchomenos and Thebes, and the citadel of Gla could have been local rivals, and deliberate destructions at various stages before c.1200 may be linked to this. Pylos too was part of this scene, although seemingly with no near rival palace, but it surely must have taken part in the supra-regional palatial political scene. This stretched overseas to Crete, to Knossos and Chania, and we should expect that rivalries would have played out on the mainland and at sea.

It is most unfortunate that the texts do not record the details of alliances and intermarriages, which undoubtedly took place, for we would have a much more dynamic and realistic vision of the Mycenaens. It is important to note, however, that unlike some of these late Maya fortifications, the Mycenaean fortifications do not reflect sudden danger, since they were probably built over longer periods (Loader 1998, 65-73), nor do the citadels appear to have been changed into siege-type sites. It may be that there was no need to improve on the major defences that already existed.

**Power sharing at Copán: the failure of divine kingship**

Copán was a major centre in the south of the Maya region (Figure 4.2 South-east zone; Demarest 2004, 215). It had relations that probably included kinship links, trade with and occasional hegemony over the neighbouring site of Quiriga; some sites further away in southern Belize were also connected, and Copán was even loosely allied to Tikal, far to the north (Webster 2002, 298, 300; Schele and Freidel 1990, 306-345). Copán’s 13th ruler, Waxaklahuan Ub’aah K’awiil reigned for 42 years during which time he increased the city’s influence throughout the region and oversaw the enthronement of Quiriga’s 6th ruler in AD 724 (Webster 2002, 300). However, in a turn of fortune, the ruler he installed 13 years later captured and ritually killed him in AD 738 in what may have been a coup, perhaps even involving distant Calakmul (Tikal’s rival).

The royal dynasty at Copán appears to have experienced a loss of prestige and decline, indicated by a lack of inscriptions and major construction, whereas Quiriga erected giant stelae celebrating their victory (Demarest 2004, 233; Schele and Freidel 1990, 317-318). The penultimate king of Copán, Yax Pasaj, was enthroned in AD 763 and ruled for some 47 or more years, and during the first half of his reign at least he was able to undertake an impressive building program (Webster 2002, 301). Despite this apparent resurgence in royal prestige, including some renewed contacts with Quiriga, where Yax Pasaj carried out a ritual in AD 810, divine kingship at Copán seems to end with him, or a short-lived successor U-Cit-Tok (Webster 2002, 318; Schele and Freidel 1990, 338-343). Some time later, some parts of the royal palace was burned, its precincts abandoned and public construction ceased even while monuments were in the process of being carved, and this appears to have been followed later by significant depopulation (Demarest 2004, 265; Webster 2002, 308, 319, 321). Quiriga also collapsed slightly after AD 810, when the last monument was raised (Demarest 2004, 265).

The power of the kings at Copán appears to have been significantly decreased by the killing of Waxaklahuan Ub’aah K’awiil and it appears that non-royal elites took advantage of this loss of prestige to assert their own positions (Webster 2002, 304; Schele and Freidel 1990, 26 Webster (2000, 73-74,) discusses Maya fortifications and importantly notes that even an apparent absence does not preclude rampant warfare. Silverstein et al. (2009) suggest that what had been thought of as defensive earthworks at Tikal may in fact be hydrological works.

25 Galactic polities – a term for polities that could rapidly expand through warfare and other means into regional powers or hegemonies, in which rulers would attract the allegiance of ‘satellite’ sites or regions (Demarest 2004, 216).

26 Webster (2000, 73-74,) discusses Maya fortifications and importantly notes that even an apparent absence does not preclude rampant warfare. Silverstein et al. (2009) suggest that what had been thought of as defensive earthworks at Tikal may in fact be hydrological works.
319). There are several indications that the power of the king had been reduced and that of the nobles increased. A council house dated to the mid-eighth century decorated with lordly toponyms suggests that the king was forced to very publicly recognise the power of the nobles and their local domains (Fash et al. 2004, 264; Demarest 2004, 233; Webster 2002, 304). Outside Copán, elites used ‘ajaw’ glyphs (usually indicative of kingship or supreme rule) to demonstrate their status as rulers and this has been taken as indicative of their claimed independence or assertions of power (Fash et al. 2004, 266). Fash (et al. 2004, 267) suggests that there was increasing competition for offices by eligible candidates from a burgeoning elite and this too will have increased competition, faction and instability within the polity, and there were also problems caused by the number sharing in royal blood (Schele and Freidel 1990, 320). In fact, the centre of Copán was surrounded by two residential areas that housed 20 noble families and their courts, some with royal connections, with others located elsewhere. Some of these, such as the House of the Bacabs, were impressive structures, rivaling royal compounds, and even had elaborate thrones or benches, some decorated with hieroglyphics, of the kind usually associated with rulership (Webster 2002, 303).

It seems unlikely that the Copán collapse was caused by the kind of warfare and strife that affected the Petexbatun region (Webster 2002, 319), and it seems that overpopulation and strain on the land was a serious issue (Schele and Freidel 1990, 321). The palace of the last king Yax Pasaj suggests that he was unable to command labour in the second half of his reign, since waste began to accumulate in several areas (Fash et al. 2004, 272). It seems that he attempted to assert authority by adopting more militaristic iconography, but at the same time his programme of conducting rituals in non-royal households, and allowing them to be monumentalised outside the royal compound, illustrates an attempt to win support from nobles, while at the same time diluting royal prestige and admitting the power of non-royal lineages (Schele and Freidel 1990, 337-338). Specific rejection of his rule may also be evident in deliberate and localised destructions of royal buildings, in particular those associated with his lineage ancestors (Fash et al. 2004, 272). Also, an altar bearing his name was pushed off the top of a building (Fash et al. 2004, 271). However, while royal rule seems to have been specifically rejected, several elite families seem to have survived for perhaps 150-200 years, which shows that the polity could continue to function without it, at least for a time. A workshop for prestige items has been dated to the second half of the tenth century and ritual deposits continued to be made around stelae and altars but then elite activity ceases (Webster 2002, 311). Through a loss of status of rulers binding them to the city, as well as environmental problems, the population may have become attracted to other leaders elsewhere.

In the collapse of the Mycenaean palace societies, there was a rejection of the specific forms of palatial rulership, defined architecturally by the palaces and Linear B, although it is argued in chapters 5 and 6 that there was often continued activity at former palace sites, and rulership and elites of some kind existed in the postpalatial period. These changes, especially with regards to Tiryns, where the material is most clear, are discussed in more detail in those chapters. What can be said here is, that it is possible that, as at Copán, Mycenaean nobles also competed for a limited number of palatial offices, or for power and prestige, and may also have benefited from central elites’ overambitiousness and even changing access to prestige goods, which may have been strictly controlled by palaces (Voutsaki 2001, 207). Evidently, such difficulties could reduce the real power and status of rulers and possibly their ability to act, and to influence over the general population, which may have increased their willingness to become more mobile, and this could have led to a consequent rise in the relative status of the nobility and to changing forms of society and its material correlates.

Changing trade networks
Webster (2002, 231-233) rejects the notion that disruption in long-distance trade networks could have played a part in the Maya collapse, however, this is problematic. Although he accepts that prestige goods used in gift-exchange were important for ‘the construction and display of elite identity’ he suggests that they were not vital for the mass of the population (Webster 2002, 232). Furthermore he doubts that royals or elites ever managed complex commercial trading operations and notes that trade is not mentioned in the texts (Webster 2002, 232). However, in a prestige economy in which certain goods underpin elite expression or social practices, the goods circulated need not be those vital for subsistence, such as food, but rather those items invested with social value. The inability to appropriate or control these would have a consequent social effect. Furthermore, the absence of concern with trade in texts, common to the Maya and the Mycenaens, does not mean that elites did not rely on the acquisition of certain goods; neither does their apparent failure to manage such systems. It simply may not have occurred to them that the supply or availability of such normal features of life could be seriously disrupted. Indeed, changes in trade patterns appear to have led to the flourishing of northern Belize during the Terminal Classic (Masson and Mock 2004). While many southern Maya centres were collapsing this was arguably the period of greatest florescence in northern Yucatan’ (Demarest 2004, 268). It is likely that these developments in the north will have affected trade routes and local and regional politics, and as noted above, the important centre of Calakmul appears to have shifted its interest northwards around AD 750. Masson and Mock (2004, 372) suggest that, while some collapses did occur in north-eastern Belize, there are no indications of population loss and that this was because of the region’s
participation in trade networks with the north. In fact, it may be that the region attracted migrants from other areas (Masson and Mock 2004, 400). However, the participation of smaller communities in maritime exchange may have ‘directly undermined the economic foundations of older, inland regional capitals’ which ‘culminated in the social transformations of the Terminal Classic period and the emergence of loosely centralized provinces that may have been conducive to the amplification of commercial exchange’ (Masson and Mock 2004, 367). These changes involved the presence of new architectural and ceramic styles, which have been used to argue for the presence of new ethnic groups, but may owe more to internal social changes and new forms of expression (Masson and Mock 2004, 377). It seems that some formerly peripheral areas, by actively engaging in local and long-distance trade networks, may have contributed to the demise of some Classic style polities, even attracting new settlers, and that these areas were able to thrive through the Terminal Classic period (Masson and Mock 2004, 400-401).

As noted in chapter 3, trading patterns may have been shifting in the Aegean in the later thirteenth century. If this was the case, it might be expected to have social and political consequences, including changing settlement patterns and the collapse of older centres. Some areas might have suffered, as has been suggested for Pylos, while others could be expected to survive or even thrive, as seems to have been the case in the Aegean and Ionian islands and Achaea. Trade and exchange should not be expected to have remained static factors, and it is likely that people could have opted into and out of systems, in expected to have remained static factors, and it is likely that people could have opted into and out of systems, in an opportunistic way, although we need not expect that they had anything like a modern economist’s view of how these systems operated or a global understanding of them. That such systems were fragile and could be disrupted seems clear from correspondence between Alashiya and Egypt (Knapp 2008, 317). However, exchange was key, and if palaces did gear their own production or channel other manufactured goods for export, they may not have controlled the visiting traders whom they relied on, nor the desires of distant markets. In this context, import substitution at final destination markets, or other places, could have played a key role in making palaces less important destinations. It could be suggested that mainland interests reached across the Aegean to key trading places like Rhodes in order to play a larger role in controlling this, although basic political and internal motivations for attempted expansion may have been more important. Any change in trade networks can have a significant effect on the functioning of a society; in the modern world, the imposition of economic sanctions as an instrument of coercion or punishment demonstrates this clearly. In the ancient world, with a much more limited global perspective on the operation of exchange, even relatively small changes could perhaps have been much more significant, especially if elites relied on them in any way.

The Western Roman Empire
Some brief comments on current trends in the interpretation of the collapse of the Western Roman Empire have already been made in Chapter 2. Like the Hittite kingdom, this empire was far larger in scale than Mycenaean palace societies, although some useful parallels can nevertheless be adduced.

Centres and elites: the importance of reciprocal relations
The city of Rome, and the Mycenaean sites that became palace states, expanded their influence, and absorbed pre-existing local elites. To ensure stability, reciprocal relations between the centre and these elites had to be maintained to the satisfaction of both. Heather (2005, 33, 139-140) notes the importance of the elite Roman landowning classes, who paid the taxes which supported the state and participated in its governance, and comments on the delicate balance the centre had to maintain in order to ensure ‘the willingness of these same landed classes to pay up.’ Any overburden could have led to landowners opting out of the system to which they were vital, while any failure to maintain their personal and material security could equally have resulted in their search for another agency that could perform the same role (Heather 2005, 140). Local elites defined themselves to some extent by their participation in imperial institutions, which offered them status, legitimacy and a privileged position, and relied on protection from the centre (Heather 1995, 21). Also, ‘the centre relied on a mixture of constraint and reward to focus the loyalties of landowners’ (Heather 1995, 38). Periodic secessions of regions from the empire should be seen as ‘quite simply a way of making sure that a satisfactory slice of the imperial cake was distributed in their own corner of the Empire’ and demonstrate the potential for the fragmentation of an overarching socio-political system (Heather 2005, 66).

The breakdown of this relationship is quite evident in the later Western Roman Empire. The presence of new and powerful military groups inside the empire caused losses of revenue and prestige for the emperors and forced local elites to cope with a new situation (Heather 1995, 27). Early in the AD 410s, local elites in Gaul gave their support to the Goths Aulfil, presumably seeing this as the best way to protect their own interests (Heather 1995, 22). In contrast, British and Armorican elites asserted themselves, taking responsibility for their own defence (Heather 1995, 22). Despite attempts from the centre to halt it, increasing fragmentation ensued with more groups discarding loyalty to the imperial centre, which eventually ‘no longer controlled anything anyone wanted’ (Heather 1995, 35). In the Roman case, the failure to maintain balance between elites and the centre happened because of the presence of other militarily strong groups within the empire. But temporary secessions had already occurred in various provinces, indicating that other factors could cause a breakdown between the centre and elites and lead to regrouping and changed loyalties.
Despite the political collapse and the failure of central control, ‘in many areas, despite some expropriation and loss, Roman aristocratic families continued wealthy and influential under Germanic rule’ (Ward-Perkins 2005, 67). Despite the real and widespread violence that had occurred as new population groups entered Roman territory, some accommodation was inevitable since the newcomers ‘in order for their regimes to operate smoothly… needed and wanted Roman aristocratic administrators and supporters’ (Ward-Perkins 2005, 13-24, 66). Indeed, the Romans themselves had adopted such a policy in their expansion, adding an extra tier of governance while maintaining local power structures where it suited them. Roman rulership and practices were often imitated, although Roman rights could be forfeited to the advantage of newcomers (Ward-Perkins 2005, 68-71). There were also obvious linguistic continuities in continental Europe, as well as discontinuities in Britain. However, the Roman way of life, and the material culture that had accompanied it, eventually disappeared in these new circumstances, though to different degrees at different paces in different areas (Heather 2005, 437-438). In these circumstances the empire that had been could not function as before and neither could local elites, and it is in this context that the formation of new identities, albeit with inevitable continuities, must be seen.

In essence, the collapse and transformation as presented above, hinged on the relationships between power groups and the arrangements made by groups and individuals to facilitate their survival and success. New accommodations were forced by the arrival of new powers, although rearrangements, including secession had already been experimented with. These differed in their consequences for identity only because of the presence of new groups with non-Roman identities, visible in material culture. The same essential relationships between central elites and others would have existed in the Mycenaean palace states, albeit on a smaller scale, within a more localised setting. Nevertheless, any failure to maintain an equitable balance by the centre, could have resulted in similar opportunism or dissatisfaction by local elites. While the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces did not lead to any immediately visible changes in identity, except the loss of particularly palatial forms, as represented in material culture, which may suggest that non-Mycenaean power groups were not involved in the collapse, such fragmentation could nevertheless have encouraged the formation of new corporate identities over time.

**Discussion**

The preceding discussion of factors involved in the collapse of the Hittite kingdom, the Classic Maya polities and the Western Roman Empire reveals that a wide range of potentially destabilising processes were at work, and these could interacted and combine with particular events at particular times, with unpredictable outcomes. The expansion into and maintenance of overarching systems of rule, including territorial expansion and the imposition of influence ‘often creates internal problems: the prizes to be gained from wielding power are that much greater, the consequences of not sharing in the profits that much more devastating’ (Kuhrt 1995, 244). The inevitability of collapse in all these cases is improved and quite debatable and it seems that the collapse of such polities owes much to chance and coincidence, as well as to the desires ambitions and personalities of individuals and their social groups, played out against a backdrop of practical survival within the physical environment. In itself this is shown by the different effects of similar occurrences (e.g. earthquakes or invasions) at different times; the ability to cope at any time was defined by specific and contemporary factors. This conclusion should be extended to the Mycenaean collapse (Dickinson 2006a, 43). Despite the fact that Tainter (1988, 86) largely rejected the ‘chance concatenation of events’ as a suitable explanation for collapse, suggesting it has some ‘logical failings’, his intention to produce a generalised theory ‘for a global understanding of a recurrent process’ may indeed be impossible and even undesirable since it reduces dynamic human action to motiveless structure.

The role of ‘barbarians’ as outlined by Bronson (1988, discussed in chapter 2) seems to have some clear validity in the case of the Hittites. The Kaska and other groups evidently preyed on the Hittite kingdom throughout its existence, causing destructions and serious problems for the king to cope with, entailing his attention and expenditure. They disrupted trade, caused destructions even in the Hittite homeland and at its capital and annexed territory. However, the Hittites were usually able to cope, if not to prevail, and did so successfully for centuries, although the danger posed by the Kaska and others increased when the king faced other problems. A similar situation can be envisioned for the Western Roman Empire, in which military incursions disrupted the economy, diverted resources and led to the fracturing of relationships between affected elites and the centre. Whether such a scenario applies to the Mycenaens, as Drews (1993) suggests, is doubtful according to Dickinson (1999c, 25). However, with Mycenaean polities being much smaller in scale, hypothetically any troubles with barbarians or raiders may have been more problematic for their survival and success.

Perhaps more relevant for the Mycenaean collapse are the problems apparent in coping with vassals, as faced by the Hittite kingdom and amongst the Maya polities. Although in the Hittite case, the scale is again larger than any that would have been experienced by the Mycenaean kings, vassalage and attempts at hegemony and empire-building amongst the smaller scale Maya polities attest to similar difficulties. Attempts at dominance and power relations may have played a similarly important role, perhaps especially between the many important centres in the

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27 Todd (2001, 14-15) notes that these were complex events, which involved ‘the emergence of ethnic and other units, in some cases based on earlier groupings and in others evidently new.'
Argolid, whose relationship is uncertain, but also more widely between palace sites and non-palatial regions, perhaps especially the Aegean islands. Hittite and Maya vassals could refuse to approve the dominance or rule of the centre, act in their own interests or otherwise cause problems, which often coincided and exacerbated other difficulties. Rejection of central authority by vassals could lead to difficulties in maintaining the centre and its eventual failure.

Inter-state conflicts, often involving geographically distant Maya polities were common, as the situation in the Petexbatun makes clear, and these could intensify existing problems, cause localised collapse and even rejection of existing ideological systems. Again, it is possible that this could have become a reality in parts of Mycenaean Greece, and the lack of physical evidence for battles and emergency defences does not rule it out. Such conflict would likely result in the targeted destruction of elite centres and elite groups and be accompanied by the abandonment of other sites and disputed or border areas. Large-scale and repeated conflicts, associated with other problems, late in the Hittite kingdom also seem likely to have been major factors involved in its collapse. Conflicts, either caused by rivalry, competition for resources, or environmental changes, consumed resources and manpower, disrupted normal life and potentially had negative psychological effects within society. Military conflicts could occur even within royal dynasties, with faction and civil war real threats.

Internal conflict either between a king and nobles or within royal families has been seen as a prime cause of instability. At Copán, the power of the king was restricted by powerful families, and royal authority and its symbols were rejected. This symbolic rejection of former royal ideology also seems to have occurred in Mycenaean Greece. Dynastic problems and difficulties with succession were major flashpoints for the Hittite royal family. Problems at Tikal seem to have led to the foundation of an alternative royal centre at Dos Pilas and the intensification of rivalries and war involving Tikal’s enemy Calakmul. The possibility of civil conflict and even regional war stemming from these instabilities was an ever-present threat. Another side of this can be seen in the breakdown of mutually advantageous relationships between elites and centres, as in the Roman collapse. This led to changing loyalties, the collapse of central authority and the transformation of the political, social and material landscape. Such a scenario is plausible in Mycenaean Greece, where local elites could have opted out of palatial systems, causing them to fail.

Changing patterns of trade could also affect the power of elites to reinforce their status visibly and through reciprocal giving, especially if they did not or were not able to actively control it. The growth and decline of particular regions could affect and be affected by this and some formerly peripheral areas could successfully opt into distribution or trade systems, leading to the flourishing of their areas, as seems to have happened in north-eastern Belize. Such factors could stimulate the movement of people to already successful or growth areas and away from declining or problem places, as is seen in contemporary global migration patterns. This is also a plausible reason for changing settlement patterns in postpalatial Greece, to be discussed in chapter 5.

To all of these factors may be added those caused by other stresses, such as climatic or localised weather events causing disruption to agriculture, population problems, plagues and epidemics. While ancient societies evidently could and did cope with these phenomena, when combined with other problems, such as those discussed above, collapse must be seen as a possible outcome. It is likely that the palace societies of Mycenaean Greece experienced similar social and other stresses to the Hittite kingdom, the Classic Maya polities and the Western Roman Empire in terms of maintaining their integrity as systems. While their collapse was not inevitable, and indeed they developed and maintained themselves for some time, a variety of factors made collapse a not unlikely occurrence.
5. SETTLEMENTS AND POPULATION MOBILITY IN THE POSTPALATIAL PERIOD

Introduction
A comparison between the palatial and postpalatial periods reflects significant differences in the number of visible sites, and these differences are usually related to depopulation, mobility and migration, often in the context of flight from Greece altogether, or movement to other parts of Greece and the Aegean (Figure 5.1). Some of the problems with interpreting the evidence for population and depopulation were mentioned in chapter 1 and are discussed further below.

As noted in chapter 3, migration and population movement have traditionally played an important role in explaining the collapse c.1200 and have been also been taken as characteristic features of this period in the eastern Mediterranean. Morris (2003, 8) recently stated of discussions of the collapse that ‘the most consistent element involves the relocation of people in large numbers and the re-formation of social groups in new locales and new forms of communities.’ Such explanations have often been thought able to integrate later Greek myths and traditions, such as Thucydides’ (1.12) description of post-Trojan war Greece as ‘in a state of ferment; there were constant resettlements, and so no opportunity for peaceful development,’ and archaeological change.

As with collapse theory, explanations of culture change are also prone to changing trends in archaeological theory (discussed also in chapter 2). Renfrew and Bahn (1996, 36) note that already by 1948, there was some dissatisfaction with archaeology that seemed only capable of offering explanations couched in terms of migrations of peoples and ‘influences’. Although a few scholars, recently Eder (1998; c.f. Voutsaki 2000), still seek to link later Greek myths such as the coming of the Dorian into the archaeological framework of the LBA/EIA transition, most scholars nowadays rightly conclude that such an exercise is fundamentally flawed, both in terms of the nature of mythic evidence and its supposed historical content (see Hall 1997) and in the resort to mass migration itself as an explanation of change (e.g. Dickinson 2006a, 54; Whitley 2001, 80; Renfrew 1987, 135). A more realistic scenario admits ‘merchants and manufacturers, mercenaries and slaves – as a mobile army of diverse opportunists or victims of circumstances,’ while there is no need ‘to imagine the mass migrations that originally dominated modern reconstructions of this period, over-determined by more recent phenomena’ (Morris 2003, 9).

This is not the only aspect of the period in which mass population movement is thought to play a part. A whole series of hypotheses have been developed suggesting Aegean origins for some Near Eastern populations, most notably the Philistines of Palestine (Dothan and Dothan 1992), and these rely on the notion of mass migration from Greece attendant on the collapse c.1200. Cyprus plays a key role in these supposed events, as do the Sea Peoples, though while Cyprus became increasingly Greek from the beginning of the EIA onwards, Palestine did not. There is much debate and speculation concerning these theories and little general agreement. Nevertheless, while explanations of culture change that rely on mass migration may be out of favour, they are still present, and the stability and mobility of populations and the nature and scale of movements of people in Greece, the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean require objective examination. This chapter will seek to examine the evidence for settlement, stability and movement in the population of Greece and the Aegean in postpalatial times and the nature of external contacts, including gift exchange trade and diplomacy. The discussion will also necessarily extend to the wider problems of Cyprus, the Near East and the Sea Peoples. Before turning to these matters, it is necessary to review briefly what survey archaeology can reveal about sites and settlement patterns and how these changed between the palatial and postpalatial period, as well as some issues in the interpretation of this data.
The contribution of survey

In the last three decades, survey has played an increasingly prominent role in the archaeology of LBA Greece (Shelmerdine 2001, 342-346). This technique has allowed some useful regional and diachronic comparisons of settlement patterns to be made, although ‘it is not a substitute for excavation’ (Shelmerdine 2001, 346). In this section, a brief summary from notable regional surveys will be given, and some of the problems in interpretation discussed with regards to numbers, distribution and categories of site.

One influential early extensive survey, the Minnesota Messenia Expedition (UMME; McDonald and Rapp 1972), determined that there were 168 habitation sites in LHIIIB in the territory they surveyed (McDonald and Hope Simpson 1972, 141). However, LHIIIIC pottery was only found at 16 sites, with three of those uncertain, while Submycenaean pottery was claimed at 9 sites (5 uncertain), although, as true Submycenaean pottery has not been found in Messenia, this pottery may belong later (McDonald and Hope Simpson 1972, 143). Following more intensive fieldwork in other parts of Greece, some doubt was cast on whether UMME’s results were really representative of settlement patterns, as it seemed to differ from other regions (Davis et al. 1997, 395). However, more intensive survey work around Pylos, by the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project (PRAP), again revealed only a very few finds of LHIIIIC material (Davis et al. 1997 451-452). A scenario of postpalatial depopulation is usually presented. Since this region is one of the most intensively studied, especially with regards to the LBA, it is almost inevitable that this pattern has to some degree been accepted as representative of the whole of Greece at the end of the LBA, although to do so is assuming too much.

The recent Asea valley (Arcadia) survey revealed little about LHIIIIC; indeed, only single sherds of LHIII date have been found at four sites in the valley, two of which may in fact have been one site (Forsén et al. 1996, 89). Two of the sites are located on hill slopes, while the others are in the valley. The lack of earlier LHIII sites is reported by members of the survey team as ‘difficult to grasp’ (Forsén et al. 1996, 89), given that in other surveyed areas, at least in the Peloponnese, there seems to be an increase in the number of sites in this period (except perhaps in Lakonia, see Cavanagh and Crouwel 2002, 146). Nevertheless, Forsén et al. (1996, 97) comment that the area may often have been less densely settled as it is mountainous and quite remote.

The Methana Survey (eastern Argolid) revealed three large sites (>1 hectare) and a total of 8 identified sites in the Mycenaean period (Mee and Taylor 1997, 52-53). Sites, including two ‘classic Mycenaean’ acropolises (MS10 and MS67), seem ranged at approximately 2km distance from each other around the coastline of the peninsula, with one large site (MS 108) on the mountainside above 3 smaller sites, including one where excavation has revealed a notable shrine (MS13) (Mee and Taylor 1997, 52 figure 4.5). The 115 sherds collected seem mostly to belong to LHIII, with some specifically attributable to LHIIIA or IIIB, but there is no certain LHIIIC. Despite this, Mee and Taylor (1997, 53) comment that ‘this does not necessarily imply that the LH period ended in catastrophe’ since three of the sites have an ELA component; and ‘despite the lack of LHIIIC pottery there is evidence of continuity’ (Mee and Taylor 1997, 54).

The Southern Argolid has been similarly surveyed, revealing the existence of two larger and several smaller sites during Mycenaean times, usually located in or near areas of deeper soil (van Andel and Runnels 1987, 97 Map 19). In this area, it is suggested that only four sites survived into postpalatial times, one being a fortified mountain top (van Andel and Runnels 1987, 98). Despite the problems in interpreting survey data, van Andel and Runnels (1987, 97 Map 19) state that ‘the area became virtually depopulated’ after c.1200. In fact, whether the ‘few hundred years that are a blank in the record of the area’ (van Andel and Runnels 1987, 98) really reflect a total absence of human activity, or something else, remains debatable.

A similar case could be made with regards to the Berbati-Limnes survey, in which Wells (1996, 207) suggested that this area was abandoned from the twelfth to eighth century. The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project (Wright et al. 1990, 638, 641-642) also found that occupation in the region did not continue on any scale in LHIIIC; Tsoungiza, the most significant local site, revealed only a few traces of continued activity. In the Nemean area generally, the paucity of LBA pottery could seem surprising, given the proximity to Mycenae and the potential links between the two regions (Wright et al. 1990, 609, 641-642).

As for Lakonia, Cartledge (2002, 54-55 Figure 7) noted some 35 sites with certain LHIIIIB pottery, and another four less certainly identified. However, there are other sites that could not be precisely dated and he noted a total of 63 LHIII sites (Cartledge 2002, 58). These were concentrated in the Eurotas valley, but sites were also located at the sides of the valley and up into the mountains. Main sites seem to have been spaced at approximately 5km intervals, taking advantage of the local terrain. Cartledge (2002, 59-60 Map 8) notes only 7 certain LHIIIIC sites known, with another eight possible. Demakopoulou, in a slightly later study (cited in Cavanagh and Crouwel 2002, 143 and n.131), identified 52 LHIIIIB sites in Lakonia, with 9-16 of them occupied in LHIIIIC. The LHIIIIC sites were widely spread,

28 Cartledge (2002) is the 2nd edition of his book, originally published in 1979. Chapter 6, ‘The Last Mycenaeans c.1300-1050’, while useful, does not seem to have been updated – the latest source in the further reading section dates to 1977. Thus it ignores work such as Demakopoulou (1982), Dickinson (1992) and the Lakonia Survey (Cavanagh et al. 2002).
THE COLLAPSE OF PALATIAL SOCIETY IN LBA GREECE AND THE POSTPALATIAL PERIOD

including Epidaurus Limaera on the east coast, Pellana and Amyklai, some distance from each other in the upper Eurotas valley, the Menaiai, where LHIIC pottery was found on Aetos Hill, and Ayios Stephanos in the Helos Plain (possibly no later than transitional LHIIB/C; Mountjoy 1993, 22) (Cavanagh and Crouwel 2002, 143).

The Mee-Cavanagh Lakonia survey (Cavanagh et al. 2002) focused on a small part of Lakonia (east of Sparta and north of the Menelaion), and counted ten sites as definitely Mycenaean, with most of the pottery found in the survey belonging to LHIIIA and B (Cavanagh and Crouwel 2002, 142-143). Mycenaean pottery was also found in small amounts at eight sites occupied in other periods; there were also isolated finds of Mycenaean pottery in nine areas and at three out of area sites (Cavanagh and Crouwel 2002, 143). Given the comments of Bintliff et al. (2000; see below), some caution must be exercised with these numbers, since isolated finds and ‘off-site scatter’ may actually indicate small sites. Cavanagh and Crouwel (2002, 145) state that ‘it is difficult to establish numbers and sizes and to detect patterns among the LH sites’. Concerning the LHIIC period and after, the survey has little to add to the picture outlined above and the impossibility of producing reliable population estimates is rightly emphasised by Cavanagh and Crouwel, although they do suggest that after LHIIB or early LHIIC the population level declined and that this was followed ‘it seems, by a period of virtual depopulation’ (2002, 147-148).

Fossey’s work on Boeotia (1988), which summarised earlier work based on extensive rather than intensive research, suggested that there had been a significant loss of sites at the end of LHIII, with around 40 sites present in LHIIIB, but only around 20 in LHIIC (Bintliff et al. 2000, 125). LHIIC sites known from survey seem to be located mainly along the Euboean Gulf, with a few inland, such as Eleon, as well as the sites of Thebes and Orchomenos. The intensive Cambridge-Bradford-Durham Boeotia project has to some extent forced a modification of Fossey’s results. Whereas Fossey used his data to estimate prehistoric site density at around 1 site per 33km², intensive survey suggests a much higher density of around 1 site per 1.6 km², which raises the possibility that many sites are ‘invisible’ or have been missed (Bintliff et al. 2000, 126 Table 2). There seems to be a general absence of the ‘invisible’ or have been missed (Bintliff et al. 2000, 126 Table 2). There seems to be a general absence of the small Mycenaean sites of LHIIIA-B prevalent in Messenia and in any case, of the whole survey, only one possible LHIIB/LHIIC sherd was found at the major site of Hyetos.

In general, the data produced seem to suggest a decline in site numbers in LHIIC, which in turn is often taken to indicate depopulation. Although the matter of making population estimates from survey or site counts is extremely hazardous and speculative, it nevertheless seems that the smaller sites visible in palatial times go out of use in the postpalatial periods, and the fewer sites that are used tend to be smaller, although they may still be substantial villages, which surely reflects a lower overall population, a feature that continued for some time (Dickinson 2006, 69-70, 88-89). While some sites could be large, it is not really possible, given the survey results, to be more precise than in distinguishing large, medium and small sites, all of which appear to be farming settlements (Dickinson pers.comm.). Ritual or cemetery sites are rarely identified through survey. There is really very little evidence from the survey data on which to base any general statements on site distribution in the postpalatial period, though sites continued to be present both by the sea and further inland in areas that had been previously occupied.

One major problem is the nature of the diagnostic pottery, and its visibility in survey. The presence of a fragment of plain kylix stem or foot is taken to indicate settlement or activity in LHIII, but, as kylikes were popular types, without excavation the nature of activity can not be determined. However, to distinguish between the phases of LHIII, it is necessary to have either some distinctive decoration, such as banding on the rim or body, or, with some open vessels, a rim profile, and these are not very common in LHIIC, and less so in the EIA. Some pottery, including plain kylix fragments, can also belong anywhere in LHIIIA2-B as well as LHIIC Early. It is also often the case, as seen above, that pottery is found in very small quantities, and those belonging to LHIIC in particular may be less easy to identify because the diagnostic material rarely appears on the surface, except at very large sites such as Eleon (Dickinson pers.comm.).

It has been suggested that survey data may fail to identify a highly dispersed population living in very small sites, and that even with intensive survey smaller sites remain difficult to identify, and finds may be relegated to ‘off-site scatter’; small postpalatial sites that could have existed may thus be missed off any lists (Bintliff et al. 2000, 138-139). Rutter (1983) has discussed the existence of periods of low visibility in the archaeological record, and the problems with the evidence must be taken seriously. Bintliff et al. (2000, 127-128) have also noted that, with regard to identifying Late Bronze Age sites:

the poorer quality of the dominant coarse and domestic ware, coupled with a far longer period of weathering by cultivation and climate, and the further destructive effect of disturbance and destruction from reuse of the site area, have all acted to reduce the quantity of prehistoric finds compared to those of the Classical era.

However, it is doubtful that coarse pottery was dominant throughout Greece; plain or simply decorated wheelmade pottery was still produced in considerable quantities in LHIIC Greece, and there is no particular reason why it should not have continued to be used at small sites, as in palatial times (Dickinson 2006, 96-97). Furthermore, Dickinson emphasises that there is no evidence that this category of very small sites existed.
All in all, the current data from survey archaeology have very little to add to a positive understanding of the postpalatial period: ‘in no mainland region does the evidence allow the clear definition of a settlement pattern, let alone a site hierarchy’ (Dickinson 2006, 90). The evidence for LHIIIc sites is clearly more limited than for the preceding LHIIIB period, but quite how this should be interpreted in terms of settlement patterns and population size is unclear. These changes on the mainland have been traditionally interpreted as representing flight and depopulation, and linked with apparent changes elsewhere, but this begs many questions. A coalescing of population at a few centres could reflect a decrease in population, and that it was now easier to farm land around these sites rather than to be spread more widely; it could also reflect a desire for security, or both. It was evidently possible for large sites such as Tiryns, albeit an exceptional case on the mainland, to thrive in LHIIIC. Later site use in the EIA is sometimes taken as suggestive of continuity (as in the Methana survey), and a period of low visibility, rather than depopulation, is possible, as seems to have been the case in other places and periods.

Population and Mobility in the Postpalatial Period
While generally the population of Greece is assumed to have grown through the palatial period and to have been fairly sedentary, the population of the postpalatial period has traditionally been suggested to have experienced both a significant decline and increased mobility. Growth itself may have been a consequence of the increased stability offered by the palace system and decline a consequence of its demise. Deger-Jalkotzy (1998a, 117) notes the common opinion that it is reasonable to assume ‘that many people were killed during the violent events which brought to an end the period of the Mycenaean palaces’ but also that the majority ‘left their homelands for safer places of refuge’. However, it will be argued below that the latter scenario, seen as mass migration, is inherently implausible, and to assume that many people were killed directly in violent events presents its own problems. Over time, internecine warfare could be devastating for populations, eroding stability and agricultural production, and this could have long-term consequences for populations (Snodgrass 2000, 365). Also, the destruction of elites could have similar consequences for culture change. Needless to say, episodes of plague could also explain population decline over considerable periods.

These widespread views have led to a generalised impression of a largely deserted landscape in Greece after 1200, which characterised the Dark Age, until population began to grow again in the eighth century (Coldstream 1977, 367-368; Snodgrass 2000, 364-367). Although inferences about the levels of population are highly questionable, certainly there are far fewer visible sites in some areas such as Messenia, Eastern Boeotia and Thessaly (Deger-Jalkotzy 1998a, 117). However, other areas of Greece, such as Achaea (Vermeule 1960, 18) and several Aegean islands such as Paros, Naxos (Schilardi 1984, 202) and Rhodes (Mee 1982, 90), as well as Cyprus (Mee 1982, 90) have been thought to have experienced increases in population, often suggested to be refugees fleeing former palatial states. The notable LHIIIc cemetery at Perati was newly founded and Lefkandi became an important centre and ‘there is no reason to suppose that they were without parallel’, as recent work at Mitrou has demonstrated (Dickinson 2006a, 58; Perati: Iakovides 1970; Lefkandi: Evely 2006; Mitrou: Kramer-Hajos and O’Neill 2008; Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005).

Mobility and willingness to relocate were evidently more prominent in the postpalatial period, and the reasons for this must stem from the circumstances surrounding the collapse, including political fragmentation, instability, and changing trade patterns, and the nature of postpalatial society (Dickinson 2006a, 62-67). Migrations are often used to explain material culture derived from Aegean types in Cyprus and the Levant, as well as throughout the eastern Mediterranean more generally (Dothan and Dothan 1992; Yasur-Landau 2003a and b). The movement of the Sea Peoples is often cited as a related and characteristic phenomenon, although the evidence is much more circumstantial and difficult to interpret than usually stated (Dickinson 2006a, 47). In fact, the traditional models of mass migration created to explain and describe the changed settlement patterns in this period and the population movements suggested are often simplistic, unrealistic and fail to stand up to scrutiny.

Mass migration
It seems appropriate initially to dismiss any kinds of organised mass migration from Greece (see also discussion of migration theory in chapter 3). Perhaps the most extreme proponent of this kind of movement is Lawrence Stager (1991; 1995), who proposed that some 25,000 Mycenaeans fled the palatial centres in hundreds of ships and invaded the Levantine coast. The notion of organised evacuation has also been advanced by Wachsmann (1998, 159-161), interpreting the Pylos Linear B tablets as indicative of this. However, on any practical consideration, such operations can be dismissed as logistically impossible.

Seafaring played a role in Greece from early times with the earliest evidence being from the ninth millennium; the marine environment played a significant role in enabling communications and contacts (Papageorgiou 2008). Reynolds (1996, 330-331) discussed the variety and type of Aegean ships, ranging from earlier narrow, flat-bottomed vessels with 30-60 paddlers, a later (from c.2000) 8-12m ship with sail and oars to the ‘optimum’ merchantman of c.1700 and after, adopted by the Mycenaeans, which could have ranged from 10-14m up to 35m in length and were powered by either sail or up to 38 rowers. The two large ships in the Thera fresco have 42 and 46 rowers (Reynolds 1996, 331). More recently, Wedde (cited in Eder 2006, 550-551) has argued that the oared galley was a Mycenaean design and Crielard
(2006, 279-280) has argued for innovations in ship design during LHIII C, while both note that ship technology survived the collapse of the palaces. The pictorial representations used as evidence, for example the LHIII C alabastron from Tragana tholos 1 and the LHIII C krater fragments from Livanates also reveal that these ships could utilise sail power as well (Figure 5.2; Crielaard 2006, 279; Mountjoy 1999, 358).

A similar problem has confronted historians seeking to understand the success of Geiseric’s invasion of Roman North Africa from Spain in AD 429, which involved the transportation of warriors and non-combatants. It is worth quoting Heather’s comments (2005, 268) in full: First, on simple logistic grounds, it is nigh inconceivable that he could have got together enough shipping to move his followers en masse across the sea. Roman ships were not that large. We know, for example, that in a later invasion of North Africa, an east Roman expeditionary force averaged about seventy men (plus horses and supplies) per ship. If Geiseric’s total strength was anywhere near 80,000, he would have needed over 1,000 ships to transport his people in one lift. But in the 460s the whole of the Western Empire could raise no more than 300, and it took the combined resources of both Empires to assemble 1,000. In 429, Geiseric had nothing like this catchment area at his disposal, controlling only the coastal province of Baetica. It is overwhelmingly likely, therefore, that he would not have had enough ships to move all his followers in one go.

If the difference in scale between the Western Roman Empire and a Mycenaean kingdom is considered, the naval resources that the latter could potentially have had should be regarded as significantly smaller. This must reinforce the view that any kind of mass migration event was extremely unlikely.

The level of navigational knowledge needed to successfully reach the eastern Mediterranean must also be considered. Since Mycenaens did not necessarily undertake long-distance trade themselves, they may not have possessed accurate information for areas outside the Aegean itself. For what they are worth, later Greek myths recall that the Achaeans sailing for Troy initially attacked the wrong place (Iakovides 1999b, 203). Furthermore, such a number of ships carrying such a vast human cargo would doubtless not have been welcome visitors that would still require some 250 ships. It is inherently unlikely that any such armada existed in any palace state of LBA Greece, perhaps not even all of them combined. Athens at the height of its naval power, and due to suddenly increased resources, fielded between 200 and 400 triremes but had to import a vast amount of wood from Macedon in order to build and maintain them (JACT 1984, 245-246); similar problems would have confronted Mycenaean shipbuilders, if producing ships on a large scale. The rich and well-wooded state of Ugarit, a vassal of the Hittites, which may have played a vital role in supporting them at the end of the LBA, was asked to provide a fleet of 150 ships, but this was probably exceptional in size (Bryce 1998, 177, 366; Wachsmann 2000, 105). A letter from the last days of Ugarit shows that even ‘seven ships of the enemy’ could cause damage enough, and this may reflect more usual or even high numbers.

The Tragana ship was sizeable, having space for 50 oars (Eder 2006, 551) and the shipboard fighting scenes represented at Kynos, if not fanciful, indicate the presence of a deck (Wachsmann 1998, 116). As well as merchant ships and warships, presumably a variety of smaller vessels, such as fishing boats, existed.

Considering the size of the biggest ships available, some 500 ships would have been needed Stager’s 25,000 refugees, ignoring food and water supplies. Even if we assume that a 50-oared ship could carry 50 extra people
anywhere *en route*; and it is questionable what kind of fighting force they would have been. Any hypothesis suggesting a wholesale migration from Greece to Cyprus and/or the Levant must confront these practical problems, rather than merely assume that similarities in material culture prove that such a migration was possible or plausible.

**The realities of migration**

Anthony (1990, 895) observes that ‘migration is a structured and well-studied aspect of human behaviour.’ To reject mass migrations as unrealistic and ‘largely a convenience for the explanation of anomalous trait distributions’ is not to reject the movement and mobility of people (Adams *et al.* 1978, 526). This must be admitted as a reality despite the difficulties in identifying movement and mobility archaeologically. Burmeister (2000, 542-543) has commented that ‘the assumption that preindustrial people were largely immobile must be rejected’ and Farriss (1984, 199-223) notes that the lowland Maya ‘seem to have been uncommonly restless for a people defined as ‘sedentary’’. Thus even agrarian peoples, and not merely pastoral peoples, could be mobile to a degree. Thus it is not the reality of the movement of people in the LBA that is in question, but rather how and in what circumstances it took place.

In this context, a variety of factors affect migration, which are categorised as *push* and *pull* factors (Anthony 1990, 899-900). To these may be added a third category *stay* factors and a fourth factor *ability*. These operate together to affect the likelihood of migration events taking place. *Push* factors are made up of stresses or negative factors including economic problems such as a shortage of resources, natural or anthropogenic disasters, political instability, population pressure and conflict (Anthony 1990, 899-900; Burmeister 2000, 543-544). *Pull* factors include knowledge of potential destinations, the presence of opportunity, stability, and familiar people such as kin or linguistic or cultural groups. *Stay* factors can be thought of primarily as the psychological and material factors which link a person with their home, such as family and other groups, cultural, economic and religious ties, lack of ability to move and inertia. *Ability* refers to the practical side of migration, the availability and expense of transportation, or the ability to move by whatever means available.

To these considerations can be added specific social factors governing views of migration as a pattern of behaviour (Burmeister 2000, 543), and these may be likely to change given changing circumstances, wherein migration could become more or less normal. An important factor that may encourage migration is the development of a migration stream. This might originate in a particular area and would, to some extent, be governed by the flow of information back and forth along the migration route (Anthony 1990, 903-904). Anthony (1990, 903) notes that the ‘structure of many migrations resembles a stream more than a wave,’ thus explicitly criticising the commonly assumed notions of ‘waves’ of migrants, which have often been imagined as washing around the eastern Mediterranean.

Migration can have a variety of effects both in the departure and destination area and these depend on the specific conditions involved (Burmeister 2000, 544). There may be significant demographic consequences, such as a decline in the birth rate or changing marriage patterns and social values, if younger people leave or gender biased migrations occur (Burmeister 2000, 545). There may also be increased opportunities for those who remain, or qualitative erosion in the quality of life, accompanied by increasing individualism and a weakened economy, with a shortage of human resources and abandonment of settlement structures. Return migrants, who may bring exotic goods and ideas, can also cause social change and conflict.

In destination regions effects ‘vary significantly with the power relations which are established between the immigrant and the native group,’ but there need be no violence involved nor any noticeable differences in material culture or indeed in ethnic consciousness (Burmeister 2000, 545). On the other hand, disparities may be present, or may develop, and these can lead to the development or reinforcement of ethnic identities, both from outside ascription and self-ascription (Burmeister 2000, 546).

It is commonly noted that most migrations in the present ‘consist of short-distance movements within a local area’ (Anthony 1990, 901; Burmeister 2000, 544). It is quite reasonable to suggest that this was similar in antiquity. This would seem to indicate that people usually seek to minimise their displacement and to remain in areas that are more familiar culturally, linguistically, economically, politically and socially. However, Burmeister (2000, 544) also notes that ‘distance is a function not only of space but also of social significance’ and that the social aspects of migration may play as significant a role as cost or other factors. While the social aspect can not be ignored, the practical aspects of movement must still form some limitations. Nevertheless, the presence of familiar groups located at some distance and the existence of networks that connect them provide a real set of opportunities for movement, and this scenario perhaps characterised the postpalatial period of Greece and the Aegean, and its relations with Cyprus.

**Migration to the Aegean Islands**

Many scholars have suggested a degree of migration to the Aegean islands and other sites following the collapse of the palaces (Mee 1982, 90; Karageorghis 1998a and 2001; for a map, see Shelmerdine 2008, xxxii), although the scenarios presented are certainly questionable and seem mainly to rely on an implicit focus on the mainland as a centre to the islands’ periphery.
Karageorghis (1998a, 130) states that ‘when the Mycenaean centres in the Peloponnese started to dwindle, and the occupants of the palaces fled with their followers, some of them found a safe refuge in the Cyclades which they could reach easily in small ships and where they could settle in safe outposts.’ Despite the fact that many former palatial sites were reused, often quite substantially and evidently with a high degree of organisation, as at Tiryns and Midea, he suggests that these migrations were led by mainland wanaktes, who fled for protection to remote sites such as Koukounaries on Paros (Karageorghis 1998a, 131-132; 2001, 5). Indeed, he suggests that Koukounaries may be taken as a general example of this type of fortified refuge site, located on islands or easily defensible sites, mentioning also constructions at Ayias Andreas on Siphnos, sites on Salamis, Teikhos Dymaion, as well as sites on Crete and Maa-Palaeokastro and Pyla-Kokkinokremos on Cyprus, all of which, he argues, form part of a pattern of short-lived defensive settlements in remote places near the sea (Karageorghis 1998a and 2001). This will be discussed below.

Contrary to Karageorghis, Vlachopoulos suggests that, owing to the valuable nature of the finds at the site, which surely would have been looted by pirates or raiders, it may rather have been destroyed by a natural disaster (Dickinson pers. comm.). He has also recently questioned whether the cyclopean walls were defensive in nature and suggests they may rather have been terrace walls constructed to support the buildings (Vlachopoulos 1998 & 2003). Such an interpretation throws doubt on whether Koukounaries can rightly be classified as a refuge site, and therefore whether it can be fitted into a hypothetical narrative based around Mycenaean refugees from the mainland.

Ayios Andreas, unlike Koukounaries, is situated some distance inland and dominates the south-east of the island of Siphnos, with views over the Aegean and the gulf of Platys Ialyos, where an apparently 20m high tomb, possibly a tholos, is prominent in the landscape (Televantou 2001, 193, 207-208). The fortified acropolis (Figure 5.4) with its impressive defensive architecture, consisting of two walls and eight bastions and the characteristics of its construction and internal layout has been compared to the citadels of Tiryns, Gla, Mycenae and Athens (Figure 5.5; Televantou 2001, 197-198).

The acropolis of Koukounaries is thought to have been founded early in LHIIC (Karageorghis 2001, 5), though could be earlier (Mee 2008, 368), and has substantial remains including a ‘mansion’ and cyclopean walls (Figure 5.3; Schilardi 1984, 187). Karageorghis (1998a, 131) argues that these features, along with the clay bathtub, storerooms with large quantities of objects such as fine ware pottery, storage jars, weapons, tools, fibulae, a piece of ivory furniture, rock crystal and a piece of horse harness and other objects, recall the lifestyle of a mainland wanax, who had brought with him his kingly lifestyle. He maintains that refuge sites, such as Koukounaries ‘could not be permanent’ due to their inhospitable conditions, such as a lack of available land (Karageorghis 1998a, 130). The site was burnt and destroyed after LHIIC Developed and Schilardi suggests it may have been attacked by pirates or Mycenaean refugees, but it nevertheless continued to be occupied until its abandonment early in LHIIC Advanced (Schilardi 1992, 631, 634-635).
Karageorghis (2001, 5) suggested that this impressive and well-organized site was perhaps constructed by mainlanders and contained a palace with a megaron in the north-eastern area, and was thus the seat of a *wanax*, although the excavator notes that this area is ‘very difficult to understand’ due to the robbing of stone to build the nearby church (Televantou 2001, 213). Stampolides and Kanta both argued that the site should be considered ‘a proper Mycenaean citadel, and one which has nothing at all to do with ‘refugees’ although Televantou thought the local population incapable of constructing such a site (Televantou 2001, 213). The site is thought to have been abandoned before the end of LHIIIC (Televantou 2001, 205). As with Koukounaries, the only real reason to connect these developments with mainlanders is the hypothetical refugee narrative, and it is difficult to see why islanders would not have been capable of such projects, even if they may have been inspired by developments elsewhere.

The commanding site of Xobourgo on Tenos has also been thought to have functioned as a refuge site during the LBA/EIA (Figure 5.6; Kourou 2001; Karageorghis 1998a, 132-133). The site appears to have been occupied in late Mycenaean times and beyond, as shown by the presence of stone moulds of LCIII date as well as pottery. A tholos tomb in the north of the island contained locally produced LHIIIA2 and LHIIIIB pots as well as Mycenaean style gold ornaments. However, although Xobourgo seems to have been a long-lived site, from LCIII to Protogeometric and Geometric, in contrast with Koukounaries and Ayios Andreas, it is uncertain what happened there during LHIIIC. This is due to the difficulty in understanding Cyclopean Wall A, for which parallels have been suggested at Midea and other mainland citadels (Televantou 2001, 179, 185). Televantou (2001, 185), however, suggests that certain Dark Age megalithic fortification walls, such as those at Mythi on Crete, compare better.
It has become clear through recent work at Kanakia, that the island of Salamis was important in the thirteenth century, and the bulk of the pottery found there dates to LHIIIIB and LHIIIIB2/LHIIIC transitional (AR 2001, 14-15). This 12 acre site in the south-west of the island consists of a double acropolis, spreading over two peaks, where the main settlement was located, had two harbours and was well-organised with a street plan (Figure 5.7). There were also outlying settlements. The site appears to have had extensive external links and finds include a Cypriote ox-hide ingot similar to that from the Cape Gelidonya wreck. A double megaron unit with at least 20 rooms (complex Gamma) has been identified and the megarons seem comparable to those of LHIIIIB at Midea; there was also an industrial complex which used murex (AR 2005, 10). The site appears to have suffered a destruction in the transitional LHIIIIB/C phase, and the use in LHIIIC Early appears similar to that at Dimini, with the construction of barrier walls within rooms, before the site was abandoned c.1150 (AR 2002, 15.

Figure 5.6 Xoburgo, Tenos. View from south west (a). Topographical plan (b). Source: Televantou 2001, 174 Figure 3, 175 Figure 4.
However, two Dark Age citadels have been identified at Ginani in southern Salamis and the pottery shows occupation in later LHIIIC, Submycenaean, Protogeometric and Geometric, and this would appear to demonstrate essential continuity on the island, even if focussed on different sites (Lolos 2001, 121, 127). Still during the eleventh century some contact with Cyprus is attested through the presence of a Cypriot bronze bowl from the Arsenal, and Lolos has suggested that there may be some truth to the mythical links that suggest that the town of Salamis on Cyprus was founded from the island of Salamis (Lolos 2001, 132). While Wiener notes that ‘we usually interpret the florescence of the added population of the Ionian islands in LHIIIC as new people coming in, and pushing the local population downwards’ and has commented that these changes in Salamis could be viewed as ‘people… finally giving up at Tiryns at the end of LHIIIC and moving to Salamis’, Lolos (2001, 127-128, 135) argues that the changing settlement pattern on the island is in fact similar to that on Crete (e.g. Haggis 2001; Nowicki 2001), and reflects the special needs and activities of the local population, rather than those of foreign refugees driven to Salamis from some other place, suggesting a more permanent state of organized life for the inhabitants of this island in these transitional years. It may be a case of local population shift.

In this case it has been suggested that clay analysis could be useful in demonstrating the origins of the pottery, but of course even this does not necessarily show the origins of those using it.

Although these and other sites have been argued to show evidence of population movement from mainland Greece to the Aegean following the collapse of the palaces, it is not at all clear that such an explanation best fits the available evidence – in fact the predisposition to a migrationist narrative probably itself colours the interpretation of the sites. It is debatable whether Xobourgo is best considered a refuge site to be associated with population movement and the end of the palaces, since the chronology and history of the site is so unclear. Rather than functioning as a refuge site for fleeing mainlanders, the site could equally have served as a local centre for the islanders themselves or may have been permanently occupied and the islanders were using Mycenaean culture much earlier than LHIIIC. With regard to chronology, the foundation of Koukounaries...
could still predate the collapse of the palaces; a LHIIIB Zygouries kylix stem was found (Schilardi 1984, 196 Figure 6e), and there seems no inherent reason for a local population not to be able to construct such a site, as at Ayios Andreas, as Deger-Jalkotzy suggests (1998b, 108), even if they had built no comparable centre previously. Ayios Andreas does seem to have been founded in LHIIIB, rather than after the destruction of the mainland palaces, although the second defensive wall may be later (Televantou 2001, 194, 213). As noted above, it is considered by some to be a true Mycenaean citadel rather than a refuge site. The developments on Salamis equally do not require any movement of population from the mainland.

Karageorghis (1998a, 130) states of refuge sites that:

Such settlements could not be permanent; the lack of available land and often of water supply and the inhospitable conditions of the environment in general dictated only an ephemeral abode, suitable for the psychology of the refugee whose main preoccupation was safety, especially when fleeing in an emergency.

However, there are several problems with interpreting the sites mentioned as refuge sites. It is to be questioned how much investment refugees would make in settlements that were badly sited or intended to be only temporary in nature. Both Koukounaries and Ayios Andreas seem too substantially and carefully constructed to have been intended as temporary. Both sites also had water supplies; there was a spring on the northern side of Koukounaries and a drainage system and cisterns at Ayios Andreas (Karageorghis 1998a, 131; Televantou 2001, 213). Koukounaries was also located near fertile and well-watered land (Schilardi 1984, 184).

Elsewhere, Karageorghis (2001, 3) argues that local people would seek refuge from seaborne attack by retreating behind hills to places with ample supplies of water. But for mainland people, it would seem easier for them to remain on the mainland and seek more defensible locations rather than to flee to the islands, if that was their concern. Certainly this argument seems to ignore the evidence for continued activity at palatial centres like Tiryns, Midea and Mycenae after c.1200, as well as at sites like Perati, Lefkandi and Mitrou, unless the wanaktes are presumed to have fled and left a vacuum into which others attempted to step, which is possible. As for interpreting Teikhos Dymaion as a refuge site, this again ignores its use throughout the LH period and importance in LHIIIB, when it may have been fortified (Mountjoy 1999, 402). And, for mainland people in the Argolid, locations such as the eastern Argolid would surely have been easier to relocate to and quite defensible, yet there is very limited settlement there after c.1200: only 4 sites including a fortified mountain top are visible (Van Andel and Runnels 1987, 98).

Given the likelihood that the abovementioned island sites were being developed from LHIIIB, during the palatial period and when fortifications at mainland sites such as Mycenae and Tiryns were being enlarged or improved, and given the generic similarities with mainland constructions, it seems more appropriate to suggest that the island sites were being modified in a similar way, perhaps due in part to increased interaction with mainland centres, rather than that they were constructed by mainland Mycenaean migrants fleeing collapse. In fact, the islanders may have been taking part in new economic activities suggested by a widening access to trade routes (Sherratt 2001 and 2003). If we can detach their development from a focus on a hypothetical narrative of events on the mainland, we could recognize on the islands the presence of individuals and groups who no doubt had complex relations with the mainland, but equally could seek to take an active part in the world around them, rather than being merely passive victims of migrations, their history and abilities subordinate to those of the mainland.

This argument may be supported by evidence from other island sites such as Phylakopi on Melos and Ayia Irini on Kea (Keos), which testify to the richness and capability
of island communities in Mycenaean times (Figure 5.8). Phylakopi was a long-lived site, founded in the EBA and the LBA ‘third city’ was built over the MH settlement and enclosed by a wall (Mountjoy 1999, 889). During LHIII A1 a megaron was constructed over a LCI mansion, and possibly formed part of a ‘proto-palace’, and Mycenaean pottery became predominant (Mee 2008, 366). A new fortification wall was constructed in LHIIIB1 or Middle, which Deger-Jalkotzy links to the building of mainland fortifications (Deger-Jalkotzy 1998b, 107). Two shrines were also constructed, the West shrine in LHIIIA2 and the East Shrine in LHIIIB1 and both were in use for the duration of Phase 2a, LHIIIB to LHIIIC Middle, until they were destroyed, perhaps by an earthquake or human agency (Davis 2001, 49; Mountjoy 1999, 889; Deger-Jalkotzy 1998b, 107).

Although there is no secure date for the end of the town and the megaron, it has been suggested that they were destroyed at the same time as the shrine (Deger-Jalkotzy 1998b, 108). There was no destruction around 1200BC but the later destruction has been associated chronologically with that of Koukounaries, and was followed by a short-lived reoccupation. Nevertheless, Phylakopi shows no hint of the population influx suggested for other sites but rather continuity in its traditions, with LHIIIC pottery being locally produced (Mountjoy 1999, 889).

At Ayia Irini on Kea, there was similarly a substantial LHIII settlement that experienced several destructions (Davis 2001, 31). However, although there is only a little evidence for use of the site in LHIII C, following a destruction at the end of Phase 7, the temple demonstrates continuity through LHIIIC and into Protogeometric times, with 3 LHIIIC building phases (Caskey 1984; Mountjoy 1999, 865).

Similarly, Naxos had long-lived sites, especially at Grotta (Figure 5.9), which may have been occupied almost without interruption from the Neolithic (Lambrinoudakis and Philaniotou-Hadjianastasiou 2001, 157). The earliest pottery from Grotta is LHIIA (Mountjoy 1999, 938-939). Mikre Vigla could fit into Karageorghis’ pattern of refuge sites, being situated on a headland, yet the pottery suggests it was in use from LHI/II into LHIIIC, rather than a new late foundation (Mountjoy 1999, 938). The acropolis of Rizokastelia may also have been occupied into LHIIIB/LHIIIC (Mountjoy 1999, 938). The LHIIIA to LHIIIB settlement at Grotta seems to have been the main settlement on the island (Lambrinoudakis and Philaniotou-Hadjianastasiou 2001, 159) and while it has been suggested that an increase in tomb numbers indicates immigration it may equally suggest an increased concentration of population from the island (Dickinson 2006a, 64). A new fortified settlement on a different orientation was built over the earlier settlement either in LHIII C or just before, which lasted throughout the LHIII C period until being abandoned except for use as a burial site (Lambrinoudakis and Philaniotou-
The collapse of palatial society in LBA Greece and the postpalatial period

Hadjianastasiou 2001, 159). This town and the nearby chamber tomb cemeteries of Aplomata and Kamini are suggestive of a sustained period of prosperity and prestige throughout LHIIIC, with widespread contacts throughout the mainland and Aegean to Crete and Cyprus (Lambrinoudakis and Philaniotou-Hadjianastasiou 2001, 160; Vlachopoulos 1998, 237). The presence of four gold plaques of LHIIIC date, with representations of an infant or goddess from a child’s grave at Kamini, interpreted as a diadem or necklace, which may have come from or been influenced by Cypriot models, would support this (Karageorghis 1998c).

Although many scholars have more or less adhered to the notion that developments in the Aegean islands reflect the problems encountered by the mainland and the area acted as a refuge zone for mainland Mycenaeans, this fails to appreciate the region in its own right. It overplays the notion of the Aegean islands as a peripheral area rather than one actively engaged in regional interaction in its own right (see Mee 2008, 366 and note 17). The evidence from long-lived sites such as Phylakopi, Grotta and Ayios Andreas and the construction and settlement patterns that are visible suggest capable and organised groups asserting themselves. Whether the various defensive elements, if indeed they are always such, need be construed as responses to imminent threats or are better interpreted as bids for prestige or simply local developments is debatable, as it is for the mainland (Lambrinoudakis and Philaniotou-Hadjianastasiou 2001, 164, 165). Vlachopoulos (1998, 238) has argued that the varied types of defensive wall constructions in the Cyclades, built at different times, make it unlikely that they were constructed as a response to a common threat, and also that ‘the lack of contemporaneity argues against the theory of a simultaneous establishment of ‘refugee’ settlements in the Cyclades.’ While not discounting the possibility of some movement to the islands, he sees no evidence for a significant population rise and suggests the settlements present a varied picture. In fact, he suggests that the LHIIIC period was a peaceful one for the Cyclades and the Aegean as a whole, since there is a lack of evidence ‘for violent and simultaneous catastrophes’. Although periodic destructions did occur, which show that it seems not to have been a completely peaceful period, these were a normal feature of life throughout Mycenaean times. Indeed, it is the apparent synchronicity of destructions and abandonments on the mainland, which rather forces such a dramatic notion of the collapse and its effects in the islands.

Rhodes

Rhodes is another island where refugee migration from the mainland has been claimed during LHIIIC, in the form of either permanent settlers or those on their way to Cyprus (Georgiadis 2004, 66). It has been argued that Rhodes was closely connected to the mainland in Mycenaean times (Mee 2008, 369; Voutsaki (2001, 209-211) has hypothesised that Rhodes in LHIIIA2-B was at least partially conquered by a mainland force, while Sherratt (2001, 220-223) suggested autonomous Rhodes as a trading entrepot linking mainland palaces and the Aegean to the eastern Mediterranean. It has also been identified as the centre or part of a Mycenaean Ahhiyawa (see discussion in chapter 1; Hope Simpson 2003; Mountjoy 1998). In fact, some have argued that migrations from the mainland, the Argolid in particular, to Rhodes took place at this time (Georgiadis 2004).

In great part these arguments rest on the pottery. Scientific study of the pottery from Ialysos shows that imports from the Argolid formed almost 85% in LHIIIA2, almost 60% in LHIIIB, and less than 10% in LHIIIC (Georgiadis 2004, 64). This pattern seems to be similar at other Rhodian sites and is unparalleled elsewhere in the south-eastern Aegean. Furthermore, most of the 25 sites with Mycenaean pottery in LHIIIA2 were typically mainland-style chamber tomb cemeteries, and Mee (2008, 369) notes that while indigenous people could have founded and used these sites, ‘the dead were treated exactly like mainland Mycenaeans’ and that it seems ‘probable that Mycenaean settlers were buried in some of these tombs.’

After the abandonment of Trianda in LHIIIA2 and an apparent decline in habitation at Ialysos and western Rhodes, perhaps in some areas due to flooding in LHIIIB, and inferred from reduced tomb use and less pottery (Mee 2008, 368; Deger-Jalkotzy 1998b, 120), a doubling in burials in LHIIIC at Ialysos, in cleaned out tombs, has led some to suggest a new influx of settlers from the mainland. By LHIIIC Middle the number of tombs and burials at Ialysos and the quantity of pottery deposited had increased so significantly that Macdonald suggested a population increase of five times what it had been in LHIIIB (Deger-Jalkotzy 1998b, 110). However, if the evidence represents new settlers, whether they originated elsewhere on Rhodes or on the mainland is unclear (Mee 2008, 369), and the apparent decline in population before LHIIIC has not been identified in the south and east of Rhodes (Mee 1982, 88; Deger-Jalkotzy 1998b, 109; Georgiadis 2004, 68). And, since Trianda is the only settlement to have been carefully excavated, evidence comes primarily from cemeteries without comparative data from settlements.

Such pulsing in the visibility of local areas may reflect local habitation patterns or other phenomena related to trends in burial practice over time, and caution is needed when extrapolating from burials to population numbers. It has been observed that in general tomb offerings became poorer during LHIII, and as Cavanagh and Mee (1978, 31) observe ‘a break in the pottery sequence need not imply a break in the use of the tomb.’

While strong links between Rhodes and the mainland seem certain, even the political and military domination of Rhodes by the Argolid would not necessitate significant migrations from the Argolid, although the knowledge of these places could have been important in
inspiring migration streams. Here we should consider the mobility of elites and military forces, and Mee (2008, 368) notes that ‘a warrior ethos is implicit in the weapons buried in many of the LHIIIa tombs, and could be an indication that the Mycenaeans took control forcibly’. Even so, Mountjoy, who suggests that Rhodes itself could have been the centre of Ahhiyawa, notes the possibility that ‘the Ahhiyawans were the local inhabitants who had undergone Mycenaean acculturation to varying degrees. There is no reason for them to have been Mycenaean colonists’ (Mountjoy 1998, 51). Any military ethos detected in tomb evidence need not be ‘colonialist’.

As noted above, there is always a danger in inferring population levels and trends from burials and therefore this evidence cannot necessarily be taken to indicate fluctuations in population numbers and tied into a pseudo-historical narrative. Georgiadis (2004, 69), while not rejecting the possibility of some movement of population into or within Rhodes in any period, argues that if this happened it played no significant role in the development of the island. Approaching the subject of migration to Rhodes from the perspective of tomb styles, he rightly notes that pottery style and clay provenance is no indicator of ethnicity. Rather, he suggests that the diverse burial styles on Rhodes retain a strong local character, while the pattern of goods deposited is somewhat different to the mainland (Georgiadis 2004, 69). In contrast to the mainland, he suggests that LHIIIC Rhodes enjoyed a period of stability or further development, with local burial traditions continuing (Georgiadis 2004, 69). This is similar to the view of Vlachopoulos concerning Naxos and the Cyclades, mentioned above.

Migration to Achaea and the Ionian Islands

As noted above, the postpalatial florescence of the Ionian islands, in particular Kephallenia and Ithaka, and Achaea has often been viewed in the context of incoming Mycenaean populations, perhaps from Messenia or the Argolid, although Achaea is now recognised to have been well populated already in LHIIIa/B (Dickinson 2006a, 64). The region is rich in LHIIIIC remains (Mountjoy 1999, 365-402) and the major fortified coastal site of Teikhos Dymaion, destroyed at the end of LHIIIB, was reoccupied and used until the end of LHIIIC when it again suffered a destruction (Mountjoy 1999, 402). Eder notes of the postpalatial period that in fact ‘settlement patterns remained more or less unchanged, as implied by the continuing use of chamber tomb cemeteries’ (Eder 2006, 557).

However, the region seems to have played a more important role in this later period, relative to former palatial areas, and had contacts with the Corinthian gulf region and southern Italy (Eder 2006, 557; Eder and Jung 2005). This seems to be due to the region’s involvement in regional trade networks, which involved links with Crete and Cyprus, involving the movement of amber and Italian bronze-work, with Kephallenian chamber tombs containing the largest finds of amber in LHIIIIC Greece (Eder 2006, 558). In this context, people may have been attracted into the region to benefit from these interrelations, although there is little evidence for, and no need to suggest any mass immigration.

Migration to and from Italy

During the early and palatial periods, a degree of contact between mainland Greece and parts of Italy is suggested by the appearance of Mycenaean pottery, for example in the Lipari Islands and in southern Italy at Capo Piccolo (Dickinson 1994, 249). The early pottery seems to have originated in several places and the mechanisms of exchange are unclear. Vagnetti (2003, 58) suggests the probability that ‘different patterns of contact were operating side by side.’ Trade routes of the palatial period linked the eastern and central Mediterranean regions and the Ulu Burun and Cape Gelidonya shipwrecks indicating a degree of international trade, with cargoes of mixed origins, including Egyptian, Syro-Palestinian, Mesopotamian, Cypriot, Aegean and Italian materials (Mee 2008, 380-381; on Italian material in the Ulu Burun ship see Bacchuber 2004 352 note 76; Dickinson 1994, 250). In LHIIIA, Mycenaean pottery was widely distributed, reaching Sicily, Sardinia and the central Mediterranean and it has been suggested that during the LBA ‘the central Mediterranean was the main area of Aegean interest’ in Europe (Dickinson 1994, 250-251). Lo Schiavo (2002, 15, 17) notes that sites with Aegean pottery continue to be discovered.

Vagnetti (2000, 312) comments that Mycenaean style pottery was produced locally at various Italian sites in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, with some continuing to be imported. As the techniques for producing this pottery were more sophisticated than for local types (Mee 2008, 380), she suggests that, at least initially, this ‘implies a movement of specialized craftsmen, possibly on a seasonal or temporary basis, from the Aegean to peripheral areas in the Mediterranean basin’ (Vagnetti 2000, 312). The site of Broglio (Vagnetti 2000, 312) shows that the locals had an eclectic taste for pottery of different origins, manufacturing and using pottery of various foreign styles and incorporating both local and foreign shapes. This in itself serves as a warning about equating taste in pottery with ethnicity or politics. Even the appearance of locally produced Aegean style storage pithoi at Broglio that possibly contained olive oil need show no more than the use or adoption of a particular type, or changes in local farming practices and perhaps an increasing diversity of crops, but may testify to exchanges of information and ideas at a local level (Vagnetti 2000, 312).

Contacts evidently continued into the postpalatial period (Eder and Jung 2005), but Vagnetti (2000, 313) comments that there is no evidence for Mycenaean mass migration or settlements, as have been proposed for the eastern Mediterranean (discussed below). However, Punta Meliso and nearby Roca Vecchia have recently
been suggested as possible ‘refuge sites’, similar to those proposed for the Aegean islands and Cyprus, although at Punta Meliso, the Mycenaean material is quite late LHIIIC (Benzi 2001). Locally produced Mycenaean pottery has been found, which strongly resembles mainland types, particularly from Achaea and Elis (Benzi 2001, 238; Eder and Jung 2005, 490-492). This is in contrast to the locally produced Mycenaean style pottery of other sites in southern Italy. Thus Benzi (2001, 238) has argued that a small group of Mycenaeans may have relocated to Punta Meliso. Nevertheless, he observes that the proportion of Mycenaean pottery was tiny in comparison to local wares and that what Mycenaean material influence there was was short-lived, suggesting that the newcomers merged into the local population (Benzi 2001, 233). At Roca Vecchio, there was Mycenaean LHIIIC material of all phases, though this is not usually interpreted as indicative of settlement (Dickinson pers. comm.).

However, while a hypothesis involving the movements of individuals or small groups is quite possible, it could equally be suggested that, given the proximity of Apulia to Achaea and Elis, continued contact resulted in up-to-date styles being known and available for local potters throughout the region to exploit, as long as there was a requirement for it (Eder and Jung 2005, 491-492). Eder and Jung (2005, 494) note of these two sites that the use of ‘complete Mycenaean vessel sets of north-western Peloponnesian style reflect a departure from local customs and an adoption of a foreign drinking habit for special occasions’ which contrasts with the mixed features that blend Mycenaean and local characteristics elsewhere. They suggest that ‘occasions of mutual hospitality helped to develop the basis for mutual respect and the understanding of the ideological concepts of the other.’

A degree of migration from Italy to Greece and Crete has also been suggested, as mentioned in chapter 3 (Popham 1994, 283, 288; Eder and Jung 2005, 486-487). To a great degree, this relies on findings for Handmade Burnished Ware (HMB), and Pseudominyan ware (Kilian 1988a, 127-133; Rutter 1990; Belardelli and Bettelli 2007; Figure 5.10). As stated, pottery need not serve as any indicator of ethnicity or origin in any case. While Cretan HMB, and that from Tiryns, Aigeira and Lefkandi, seems best paralleled in Sardinia and southern Italy, that from other sites may have links with north-western Greece, but other regions have also been suggested and any firm conclusions seem difficult (Rutter 1975 and 1990; Kilian 1988a, 127-135; Dickinson 2006a, 52). It has also been suggested that it was created as a type of household pottery, although given the small amounts found and the continuation of the fine ware tradition, into which some HMB features were absorbed, this seems unlikely (Small 1997; Dickinson 2006a, 52; Rutter 1975, 32). Eder and Jung (2005, 486) have suggested the presence of Italian bronze workers at Mycenae in LHIIIB. Catling has argued that new styles of weapons were introduced to the Greek mainland by hired Italian mercenaries working for the palaces, a view supported by Eder and Jung (2005, 486), and Popham (1994, 288, 290) notes the link to Italy of weapons and pottery, especially to Crete, although Dickinson (2006a, 205) notes a mismatch between the distribution of Italian bronzes and HMB.

If the HMB and Pseudominyan ware do represent small non-Mycenaean groups, it should be noted that they were present in palatial and non-palatial areas, but seemingly not in the Aegean islands, although if foreign groups or individuals were present there, they need not be archaeologically visible. HMB has also been found in Cyprus, and is discussed below.

Thus quite specific types of population movement have been suggested between Italy and Greece, usually involving limited numbers or people with particular...
thought to have begun at the end of the LBA (e.g. migrations from mainland Greece to Cyprus, often considered necessary and useful to point to large scale degree, and the Greek language was adopted, it has been Since at some point Cyprus became Hellenised to a indicate that no movements took place. Schiavo 2003, 28). However, a lack of visibility does not kind used to suggest such migrations in other areas (Lo archaeologists note no archaeological disruptions of the scale, in different widely sp read sites. However, while of origin or destinations following the supposed massive migrations from mainland Greece to Cyprus, often thought to have begun at the end of the LBA (e.g. Karageorghis 2001; Yasur-Landau 2003a and b). Of course, this process is likely to have taken place over some time: the Greek alphabet, for example, only appears in the sixth century and was not widely adopted until the late fourth century, and even then it was used alongside the traditional and long-lived Cypro-Syllabic script (Tatton-Brown 1997, 80-83). Although the Greek language, the Arcado-Cypriot dialect at least, was used in Cyprus at least from around 1050, as demonstrated by the bronze spit inscribed with a Greek name from Palaipaphos, dated to the eleventh or tenth centuries, other languages continued to be used until Greek became standard only in Roman times (Tatton-Brown 1997, 81, 83; Deger-Jalkotzy 1994, 11-12).

Cyprus must be regarded as a rather cosmopolitan island, and given its location, a prime venue for interaction between different groups, of which the Cypriots themselves should not be seen in a passive role (see Knapp 2008 and Steel 2004 for recent discussions of Cyprus). Given that ethnicity is necessarily constructed in opposition to other ethnic identities and is negotiated between and within groups and individuals, and of course that it is only one aspect of identity which can be selected as a referent (Hall 1997, 26-33), interpretations of material culture on Cyprus are fraught with difficulty. It may be suggested that the construction of Greekness on the island was only one of many ongoing projects that individuals and groups may have engaged in to different degrees at different times.

Karageorghis (1992) put forward what may be regarded as the traditional, though by no means unanimously agreed, interpretation of events on Cyprus around c.1200 and after. He noted the establishment of new centres in LCIC (late 13th to early 12th centuries), which were sometimes short-lived, as well as destructions at and rebuilding of existing sites (Karageorghis 1992, 80). Novel features in site location, i.e. defensive or refuge sites, architecture, and artefacts have also been noted (Karageorghis 1992, 80-81). Some of these are taken to indicate new cultural, social and religious behaviour (Karageorghis 1998b, 276). Åström (1998, 80) too had considered that the beginning of LCIII marked ‘an abrupt break with the past.’ The explanation for these changes was sought in an Achaean colonisation and Karageorghis (1992, 83) cited Iakovides suggestion of a ‘massive emigration to Cyprus, to the Dodecanese and to Asia Minor… [which] led to the depopulation of the mainland… [and] to the decline and gradual abandonment of the palaces.’ In this view, some Mycenaeans are to be viewed as part of the Sea Peoples.

Karageorghis (1998a and 2001) has identified the Cypriot sites of Maa-Palaeokastro and Pyla-Kokkinokremos, as well as Aegean sites, as defensive or refuge settlements occupied by Mycenaean refugees. In his reconstruction, he argues that Aegean island sites may have been first occupied by Mycenaean refugee wanaktes and their followers and then abandoned in favour of a Cypriot or
Near Eastern destination (Karageorghis 1998a, 132). The Aegean islands were discussed above, and it was suggested that their development was not necessarily caused by the collapse of the mainland palaces or fleeing mainlanders and it should be noted here that Pyla-Kokkinokremos was occupied before Maa-Palaeokastro, before the end of LCII (Karageorghis 1992, 80). While it may be tempting to link these chronologically with the mainland collapse, Karageorghis’ own hypothesis (1998a; 2001) of refugees fleeing first to the Aegean and then to Cyprus does not fit this chronology, since the Aegean and Cypriot ‘refuge’ sites were roughly contemporary. A pattern of flee, found, flee, found, thus seems unlikely. Furthermore, it is unclear why refugees would need to flee so far to find safety or found refuge sites, and there was continued twelfth century activity at former mainland palatial sites; thus the motivation for such movements is questionable.

Yasur-Landau (2003a) also argues for a ‘vast Aegean component’ to the Sea Peoples, who are suggested to have moved to Cyprus and the Levant but he is somewhat more tentative than Stager, whose theories were mentioned above (Yasur-Landau 2003b). He notes two reasons why Aegean migrants to Cyprus may have been unable ‘to perform forceful colonization’ (Yasur-Landau 2003b, 50). In the first place, he rightly points out ‘the limitations of maritime migration’ in terms of the proportion of immigrant to native populations (Yasur-Landau 2003b, 50). Secondly he suggests that the Cypriot polities were comparatively strong, which will have affected the fortunes of any migrant group in terms of assimilation, integration, segregation or marginalisation. He suggests that the settlement of Maa-Palaeokastro may be an example of an independent Aegean community deliberately founded far from local Cypriot settlements. To his two reasons might be added a third: why would migrants necessarily seek forceful colonisation? To offset what he argues tend to be colonialist views of Cypriot archaeology, Knapp (2008) has recently offered a more nuanced discussion of the issues of migration, colonisation and acculturation, seeking to provide a more postcolonial perspective. While Yasur-Landau’s version of events is perhaps a somewhat more realistic picture than Stager’s, Steel (2004, 190) has argued that sites such as Maa-Palaeokastro and Pyla-Kokkinokremos might well represent native Cypriot developments, which may be analogous to new foundations on Crete, and perhaps elsewhere in the Aegean, but which need not have been founded by new people. In fact, she characterises LCIIIA settlement as experiencing synoecism (Steel 2004, 190), something which has also been suggested for mainland Greece (Dickinson 2006a, 63).

Another aspect that must be mentioned is the HMB, which occurs as a novel feature in Cyprus in LCIIIa (Steel 2004, 194). It has been found at Maa-Palaeokastro, Sindia, Hala Sultan Teke, Enkomi and especially at Kition, and postdates the appearance of HMB in the Aegean although derivative wares continue in use into the eleventh century. As in the Aegean, HMB in Cyprus is connected with immigrants, however, since it appears at the same time as local painted LHIIIIC pottery, it has been taken to represent ‘elements of a displaced Aegean population settled in Cyprus’ (Steel 2004, 194). Steel notes (2004, 195-196) that HMB on Cyprus could be related to household production, although it forms only a small percentage of any assembly, but it cannot be associated with the breakdown of the ceramic industry which intensified at this time. If the link between HMB and Italians is accepted, it may be that they were also present on Cyprus, and perhaps could have served on ships plying the Mediterranean, although they need not have had any particularly military role but could equally have had some saleable skill. Since HMB is generally taken to be an alien tradition in Greece, it is hard to see why it should then be taken to indicate displaced Mycenaean.

Some scholars even question the significance of the apparent LCII/LCIII break on Cyprus. Merrillees (1992) suggests that there was much continuity as well as change, while Åström (1998) presents a similar view, although both suspect the presence of new peoples. As noted above, Cyprus may be considered an excellent venue for interaction between peoples, and Åström (1998) notes the presence of Near Eastern (Hittite, Ugaritic, Syro-Palestinian/Canaanite), Minoan, Egyptian and Mycenaean elements, so some regular connections, no doubt involving some relocation, are not unlikely. Indeed, it is well known that Cypriots seem to have been living at Ugarit, and were present in the Near East (Astour 1970, 122). Recently however, Steel (2004, 187-213) has rightly questioned the validity of what seemed to have become standard interpretations of the end of LCII and the following LCIII periods - that the destrcutions and cultural changes were due to a mass influx of Mycenaean.

She argues that ‘despite increasing ‘aegeanisation’ of certain elements of the cultural repertoire, most significantly the transformation of the ceramic repertoire, there was no simple imposition of Mycenaean culture on the island’ (Steel 2004, 187). Towns destroyed in LCIIIc were mostly rebuilt in LCIII and burial areas continued in use, although tomb types changed from rock-cut chamber tombs to shaft graves, but some chamber tombs continued to be used and constructed into the twelfth century (Steel 2004, 187-188, 200). The production of locally made Mycenaean pottery seems to have begun in the 13th century, predating the LCIII destructions, and although it becomes much more common there is also continuity in Cypriot forms of pottery (Steel 2004, 191-19-3). In fact, Steel (2004, 193) points out that the ceramic record has been forced by modern scholars into a system of classification that would have been meaningless to a contemporary user. Rather than any simple intrusion of elements, ‘a fusion of indigenous, Aegean and Levantine elements’ seems to have taken
place, forming a new ‘cultural package’ in pottery, as well as ‘domestic architecture, weaponry and prestige symbolism’ (Steel 2004, 188, 193). She suggests that ‘rather than signalling a change in population, locally produced Mycenaean pottery instead illustrates the internal dynamics and changing trends in LC ceramic production’ (Steel 2004, 193).

Sherratt (1998, 292) has also presented a novel interpretation, and suggests that by about 1100:

- the coastal urban centers of Cyprus were acting as a kind of institutionalised ‘powerhouse’ of the ‘Sea Peoples’ phenomenon, playing a central role in the creation and maintenance of an eastern Mediterranean coastally based economic and cultural community whose ostensibly ‘ethnic’ features are of structural rather than primarily genetic or linguistic significance.

Rather than focussing on ethnicity or origins, about which little can be gleaned from pots, she stresses the evidence for changing economic trends, viewing the evolution of the Sea Peoples as a result of the subversion of traditional long-term palatial trade practices (Sherratt 1998, 294). In this view, Cypriots were heavily involved in importing Aegean and exporting both Cypriot and Mycenaean pottery, and began to mass produce their own imitation ‘Mycenaen’ ware in the late 13th and 12th centuries (Sherratt 1998, 296-298). This pottery shows continued Aegean influence but is notably eclectic in what styles are copied and local elements abound. Sherratt (1998, 298) notes that none of the pottery looks like ‘the transferred ceramic packages of any discrete groups of people.’ Some mobility is not ruled out, but it is no longer the focus or prime reason for change, and the unrealistic aspects of the mass migration of discrete ethnic groups or nations is usefully discarded in favour of a more active understanding of material culture.

Any hypothesis of Mycenaean migration to Cyprus is thus far from clear-cut (Leriou n.d.), whether connected to the mainland destructions of c.1200, which may nevertheless have spanned some 25 or more years, or later in LHIIIC (Coldstream 1994; Deger-Jalkotzy 1994), since the material changes in Cyprus around the end of LCII and in LCIII can be interpreted in a variety of ways. While it may be tempting to present a picture of connected ‘events’ with identifiable actors, as Karageorghis has done, such hypotheses are in fact highly questionable, not least since changes in material culture do not require any migration to explain them. Cypriots and Cyprus should not be regarded as passive parties, the victims of far-off events and peoples from overseas, whether Sea Peoples, Mycenaeans or others, but of active participants in their spheres of interest, which is amply documented both archaeologically and in the texts of the LBA Near East. The reality may involve more long-term processes of migration from various parts of Greece at different times over a long period and with different outcomes and expressions in Cyprus. At the same time, it would be unwise to rule out the possibility that there were small groups of adventurers who could have settled far from home, but whose material and cultural impact and identifiability through archaeology is problematic.

**Migration to the Levant**

Aegean migration to the Levant, after c.1200, has been suggested by many archaeologists, and it is bound up with the problem of the Sea Peoples phenomenon; some groups of Sea Peoples are often argued on the basis of linguistic and archaeological evidence to have Aegean origins (e.g. Dothan and Dothan 1992; Stager 1995; Yasur-Landau 2003a and b). As mentioned above, mass migration from the Greece to the Levant has been most dramatically suggested by Stager, who argued that 25,000 Mycenaeans fled Greece, becoming Philistines (1991 and 1995). The link between Greece and the origins of the Sea Peoples is prominent in two recent publications (Gitin et al. 1998 and Oren 2000) and in some views, the existence, nature and role of the Sea Peoples seems to have become historical fact without need for further explanation. It is necessary to remember, as Betancourt (2000, 297) does, that ‘the [modern] label merely acts as a ‘tag’ or ‘shorthand’ to identify a series of peoples and cultural events involving those who attacked Egypt at the time of Ramesses III,’ but even then it is commonly assumed that this can be extended to events around the eastern and central Mediterranean and further afield (Oren 2000a).

In fact, it seems that much that is suggested or assumed about the Sea Peoples phenomenon is based on circumstantial evidence and tendentious links between evidence that is far from straightforward, as well as the temptation to produce a ‘joined up’ historical narrative. Kuhrt (1995, 386) soberly observes that ‘the only sources for the role of the ‘sea-people’s in the crisis [in Anatolia and the Levant] are the accounts of two Egyptian campaigns.’ Nevertheless, because these Sea Peoples, inferred from the texts, were active around the time of the Mycenaen and Hittite collapses, and other destruction events in the eastern Mediterranean, and because the Ramesses Year 8 inscription from Medinet Habu (see Redford 2000) has been taken largely at face value in relating widespread destructions to their activities, they loom large in discussions of the LBA/EIA transition and must be referred to here.

For many years the Sea Peoples have been assumed to be migratory peoples, although this was not always the case (Drews 1993, 53). Initially, they were viewed as mercenaries who were based more or less around the borders of Egypt or in the Levant, perhaps with additions from Sicily and Greece (Drews 1993, 51-53). Drews (1993, 48) has shown that ‘the migrations hypothesis is based not on the inscriptions themselves but on their interpretation’ and in particular notes the role of Gaston Maspero in creating this factoid in the 1870s. This was based on the apparent iconographical similarity of one of the groups, the Peleset, to other groups supposed to be
Sardinians and Sicilians, whereas the Peleset, or Philistines, had formerly been assumed to be from just north of Egypt, where they were later on. It became necessary to suggest a migration in order to explain their presence in the Near East (Drews 1993, 55). Silberman (1998, 269) has also shown how archaeological theory changed with regards to migration theory, which developed in the 1870s in ‘a radical departure from earlier romantic notions of unchanging ethnic connections to territorially contiguous homelands.’ Most pertinent is the fact that Egyptian inscriptions themselves give no evidence for any kind of migration by sea, and the pictures of ox-carts, laden with women and children, long taken to indicate a migration, may in fact be, if not a stock theme, no more than locals, fleeing a punitive raid by Pharaoh’s army in Djahi (Drews 2000).

Our concern is primarily with the Philistines, who have been identified as having an Aegean origin, inferred from the limited and problematic Egyptian evidence, and from apparent similarities of their material culture to Mycenaean material culture. In particular, the so-called Philistine pottery has been key in archaeological arguments for Aegean invasion and settlement around 1200 (Oren 2000a, xvii). Similarities with Aegean pottery were noted from 1900 and in 1936 Heurtley argued from the pottery that the Philistines were Mycenaean (Oren 2000a, xvii). Furumark concluded that Philistine pottery was a local variant of Mycenaean (Oren 2000a, xvii).

While there are similarities between Philistine and Mycenaean pottery, there are also differences (Sandars 1978, 166-167). Local shapes and matt paint are found and the popular motif of a backward looking bird is rare in the Aegean. Use of red, black and a white slip, and a limited and problematic Egyptian evidence, and from apparent similarities of their material culture to Mycenaean material culture. In particular, the so-called Philistine pottery has been key in archaeological arguments for Aegean invasion and settlement around 1200 (Oren 2000a, xvii). Similarities with Aegean pottery were noted from 1900 and in 1936 Heurtley argued from the pottery that the Philistines were Mycenaean (Oren 2000a, xvii). Furumark concluded that Philistine pottery was a local variant of Mycenaean (Oren 2000a, xvii). Vieck.

Anthropoid coffins have also been taken to indicate the arrival of the Philistines (Drews 1993, 67). These have been supposed to combine Mycenaean and Egyptian traditions (Dothan and Dothan 1992, 58-63), although their appearance in a much earlier and purely Egyptian context (fourteenth and thirteenth centuries) at Deir el-Balah makes it difficult to associate them with the Philistines or any arrival of new people a century or more later; in any case they do not belong in the Mycenaean tradition. Besides, any selective link with Mycenaean features based on generic similarities with the Shaft Grave death masks (Vincent in Dothan and Dothan 1992, 62) must deal with the chronological gap and cessation of this tradition in Greece, which seems to have been unique to early Mycenaean.

As noted above, Sherratt (1998) has made a good argument for a novel interpretation of the Sea Peoples phenomenon as ‘an east Mediterranean coastal economic community.’ This argument extends to changes in material culture in the Levant and she suggests ‘very close economic and cultural ties’ between the Philistine area and Cyprus (Sherratt 1998, 302). Whereas some archaeologists appear to view the Aegean as the source of Philistine culture ‘in a general, and sometimes rather elusive way,’ Sherratt (1998, 302) notes that these elements find parallels in Cypriot material from the 13th century, and that some types found on Cyprus have no Aegean link at all.

One example is the so-called ‘Ashdoda’ seated goddess figures, which are often suggested to have an Aegean origin (Dothan and Dothan 1992, 153-156; Yasur-Landau 2001). However, Cypriot LCII figures, where chair and body are merged, offer better parallels for these than Mycenaean figures, and the differences between Ashdadas and Mycenaean figures, as with Philistine and Mycenaean pottery, were already noted by Dothan and Dothan (1992, 156; Sherratt 1998, 302 n.17). Whatever parallels can be found for specific aspects of material culture elsewhere, little can be proved with regards to ethnicity or racial origins. Concerning the local production of ‘Mycenaean’ pottery in Philistia, Sherratt (1998, 302) argues that this was a Cypriot version of Aegean type pottery and which:
far from being taken as some kind of conscious ethnic denominator with genetic race or language embodied in the fabric – can equally be seen as a continuation of the process of import substitution which saw the beginnings of such production on Cyprus in the 13th century.

Nevertheless, scholars such as Barako (2000) and Yasur-Landau (2003a and b) continue to follow the traditional invasion/migration models, seemingly under the influence of those, such as Dothan and Stager, who have developed it (Barako 2000, 513). Barako (2000, 525) continues to conflate and exaggerate the limited textual evidence and place too much emphasis on its veracity (see Redford 2000, 2-3). Barako’s (2000, 524) assertion that the archaeology indicates ‘the influx of a diverse population group, culturally defined not by occupation but by a common geographic and, most likely, ethnic background’ falls into the trap of expecting migration to be the most likely explanation, without dealing with the practicalities or motivations involved; why would large numbers of people migrate to these areas from their own? It is difficult to understand how the diverse population he emphasises could have migrated by sea, and it assumes the existence of all kinds of social bonds and mutual interests, dubiously based solely on ethnicity. While such a scenario is not impossible, it certainly raises serious questions. Yasur-Landau is rather contradictory in his approach, acknowledging the difficulties and limitations on migration imposed by the necessity of travelling by sea (2003b, 50), while still suggesting the Sea Peoples included a ‘vast Aegean component’ (2003a, 590).

Given the arguments, it seems that there is little disagreement about the novel features of Philistine material culture and the diversity of inspirations that they seem to represent. As with Cyprus, to present these changes as the result of mass migration by predatory Sea Peoples originating in the Aegean seems simply to follow a long standing tradition or need to present such changes as most easily explained in this way, rather a colonialist perspective. As usual, motivation and real consideration of how such migrations took place is lacking, and the Sea Peoples continue to loom disproportionately large, given the evidence for them. However, new approaches, which admit the varied way in which material culture is used and what it does and does not represent, suggest a somewhat more realistic picture of people actively utilising material culture in a complex way for their benefit, rather than as symbols of their ethnicity or origin. It would nevertheless be normal to expect that a degree of mobility existed, especially considering the wide circulation of goods in the LBA, and contacts appear to have continued afterwards into the EIA.

**Movements in mainland Greece**

The traditional picture of massive depopulation and even total abandonment of regions in Postpalatial Greece seems unlikely, given the problems of interpreting the data provided by survey and tombs (Dickinson 2006a, 93-98). Nevertheless, some degree of depopulation and population movement seems likely within mainland Greece, since, as noted above, far fewer sites seem to be occupied than before.

Messenia had been thought almost deserted and seems to have experienced the most significant depopulation with many sites abandoned (Mountjoy 1999, 301). Even so, it is possible to suggest a concentration of population in some areas and that a lack of evidence may be due to a lack of excavation of sites belonging to this period (Mountjoy 1999, 301). Evidently there were people in postpalatial Messenia, although most of the material comes from tombs. A LHIIIC Middle pot apparently came from a chamber tomb at Aristomenes and Ramovouni: Lakathela had LHIIIC Late pottery in a house (Mountjoy 1999, 303). At Pisaskion, 3km south of the palace at Pylos, chamber tomb T.K2 was in use from LHIIIA2-IIIC Late (Mountjoy 1999, 303). At Tragana, Tomb 1 was reused in LHIIIC Middle and Late and an early tholos at Koryphasion had a LHIIIC Early pot, suggesting reuse (Mountjoy 1999, 303). At Nichoria, there is a break in the pottery sequence, interpreted as a break in habitation, which continued again in Submycenaean (Mountjoy 1999, 305). The LHIIIC Late pottery shows links with the north-west Peloponnese and western Arcadia. Lakonia seems to have more activity visible in LHIIIC Early, with good evidence noted for Ayios Stephanos and Apida (Mountjoy 1999, 246). Nevertheless, of the 52 sites occupied in LHIIIB, only 9-16 seem to show occupation in LHIIIC (Cavanagh and Crowel 2002, 143). The number of sites reduces after LHIIIC Early and evidence is mainly from the Amyklaion, Pellanes, and Epidaurus Limera (Dickinson 1992, 114).

It is also possible to suggest concentrations of population in other areas. While many sites in the Argolid seem to have been abandoned, and there were few occupied sites in the eastern areas, expansion has been noted at major sites such as Tiryns, Asine and perhaps Argos, and this may reflect concentrations of people from outlying settlements (Thomatos 2006, 179; Dickinson 2006a, 63). Habitation also continued at Mycenae and Midea, and these sites, and Tiryns, are discussed in chapter 6. At Asine, LHIIIC habitation is attested in the Lower Town, on the northern slopes of the acropolis, where some new houses may have been constructed (Figure 5.11; Thomatos 2006, 196). Recent work re-examining the pottery and architecture has suggested that Houses F, G, H, I and K were occupied in LHIIIC, possibly the Middle and Late phase.
In Corinthia, there was also a reduction of the number of sites visible between Late Mycenaean and LHIIIC (Figure 5.12). There is evidence of LHIIIC Middle use in House P at Korakou, which has a megaron type structure with a square central hearth and a column base, suggestive of ritual activity, although it may be a house with a variety of functions not limited to cult (Figure 5.13; Thomatos 2006, 199-200). At Corinth, LHIIIC Middle pottery also comes from the area of the Julian Basilica and LHIIIC Late material from the area of the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, although architectural remains are minimal, owing to later building (Rutter 1979). There is also some LHIIIC from Tsoungiza and Zygouries, and other locations (Morgan 1999, 353-367). Morgan notes (1999, 431) that the sanctuary at Isthmia was founded in LHIIIC, as were others that continued in use through the EIA at Olympia (Eder 2001) and Kalapodi (Felsch 1981) and the Amyklaion. She suggests that Isthmia served as a convenient regional meeting place.

The Euboean Gulf area is argued to have had considerable continuity of settlement through the LBA/EIA transition (Figure 5.14; Crielaard 2006). These sites (and those in the Aegean islands, noted above) in the postpalatial period pose a considerable objection to the notion that there was any kind of ‘flight from the coast’ either on mainland Greece or the Aegean islands, since clearly many of these sites were important during this period, perhaps more so than before.

There are three particularly significant sites in this region: Lefkandi, Mitrou and Perati, although the settlement for Perati is not known. Lefkandi was occupied in LHIIIIB, although little is known about it in that phase (Sherratt 2006, 304). It became a major site with widespread contacts in LHIIIC, which has led to the suggestion that new people may have been attracted to the site and that the population expanded. Throughout the postpalatial period, the town experienced destructions and rebuilding. In LHIIIC Early, two building phases have been identified (Figure 5.15; Popham et al. 2006, 1).
5 SETTLEMENTS AND POPULATION MOBILITY IN THE POSTPALATIAL PERIOD

Figure 5.12 Sites in Corinthia (a) Late Mycenaean (b) LHIIIC. Source: Morgan 1999, 480 Figure 15.

Figure 5.13 Korakou, House P. Source Thomatos 2006, 198 Figure 3.19.

Figure 5.14 Sites in the Euboean Gulf Region (a) LHII-IIIB (b) LHIIIC. Source: Crielaard 2006, 275 Figure 14.1.

Figure 5.15 Lefkandi phase 1 (a) and phase 2 (b). Source: Popham and Sackett 1968 Figure 12.
Phase 1b follows some structural changes made to Phase 1a buildings, perhaps due to earthquake damage. Phase 1b came to an end when houses were destroyed by fire, after which they were cleared and levelled. Phase 2 was built in an orderly fashion, not following the lines of earlier walls but occupying similar positions. During LHIIC Middle, when pictorial pottery was most popular, it too suffered some destructions followed by repairs in Phase 2b. The excavated parts of the site seem to have been abandoned at the end of 2b, but there are no certain signs of destruction. Intramural burial was practiced in phase 2 (Popham et al. 2006, 1, 52-55, 70-71). The evidence for Phase 3 now seems to indicate a continued settlement in LHIIC Late; buildings that date to Submycenaean and PG also attest to clear continuity of occupation at Xeropolis, which was already suggested by burials (Lemos 2007b). Significantly, it seems that, as with Mitrou (discussed below), the EIA buildings, at least in the East sector of the site, often followed the alignment of LHIIC buildings, with walls constructed either on or close to Mycenaean walls and observing similar orientations. Particularly notable in Region 1 is a PG megaron, constructed over an LHIIC one (Lemos 2007c). It is now very clear that Lefkandi was continuously occupied throughout the postpalatial period and beyond.

Further up the gulf, Mitrou (see Figures 6.10, 6.12-6.13), now an island, which had already been occupied from the sixteenth century, also seems to have become an important site, with an elite building, possibly a megaron (Building B), being constructed in LHIIC (AR 2005, 53; see now Kramer-Hajos and O’Neill 2008). The second phase of the building seems to belong in LHIIC Middle or Late, and wheel-thrown Submycenaean pots, one with piglet bones inside may belong to its last period of use (Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 44 and 45 Figure 6). The excavators comment on the importance of this site in demonstrating strong continuity between the LBA and EIA in the area, which is emphasised by similar continuity at Kynos, Kalapodi and Elateia (Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 48). They also note the different nature of the years c.1200 and after, in comparison with parts of southern Greece.

Conclusions

It is difficult to reconcile the evidence for flourishing settlements in coastal areas of mainland Greece and the Aegean islands with any view that the seas held more danger in LHIIC than it had in palatial times. The new boom settlements which characterise the immediate postpalatial world... probably owed at least some of their success to their position on or close to maritime and isthmus corridors which could link the East and Central Mediterranean via the Aegean (Sherratt 2006, 309).

The north-west Peloponnese and Ionian islands capitalised on links to southern Italy and into Europe, while the Euboean Gulf region and the Aegean islands maintained links between themselves and more widely to the eastern Mediterranean. Even Tiryns in the Argolid continued to maintain an important position in the postpalatial world. It is likely that between these areas, and internationally, there were movements of individuals and small groups, although there is no need or evidence for mass migrations. Movements must have been undertaken with a view to benefitting those willing to relocate, although it is likely that most of the population continued to farm at subsistence levels. Studies of migration show that most movements take place on a local rather than international level, and are affected by a variety of factors. It is possible that, after initial movements migration streams could have developed, and these could have led to changes over the longer term. The beginnings of the Hellenisation of Cyprus should probably be seen in this way, and was most likely an unintentional consequence of the actions of many individuals and groups, acting on their own varied motivations over a long period of time.

Migration and population movement are difficult to for archaeology to deal with. There is no clear correlation between material culture and ethnicity or identity and traditions are actively manipulated for a variety of...
reasons. Real migrations or population movements could be archaeologically invisible while changes in material culture can be due to local factors and active human agency. It must nevertheless be recognised that they are quite common features of human society. The traditional, and often implicit view of migration and population movement as a satisfactory explanation of change in material culture tends to be simplistic, and certainly arguments for mass migration also tend to be difficult on practical grounds alone. Material and social culture are actively used and manipulated by people and groups for a variety of reasons, while sometimes no thought at all may be given to which pot (or other material item) is chosen for use. The Japanese practice of *iitoko-dori*, ‘adopting the best parts of foreign culture’ is one example of how a culture may deliberately borrow from other cultures, in terms of both material and non-material culture, without any significant migration taking place (Davies and Ikeno 2002, 127-131). Just such a picture of the active use of various material and perhaps even religious traditions may be observed around and after c.1200. Such traditions do not stick hard and fast to distinct population or ethnic groups and therefore inserting population movements as necessary for the movement of or change in material cultures is highly questionable.

Despite the successes apparent in some areas, it nevertheless seems difficult to avoid seeing some reduction in total population, owing to the significant reduction in the number of sites and the disappearance of the class of small sites that had existed in some areas in palatial times. As has been discussed, though, the evidence from survey archaeology is problematic. It is unlikely that nucleation at a few centres could explain all these losses, since most remaining sites seem fairly small, although some areas seem to have been more affected by apparent losses than others, and population may also have spread out more thinly in some places. This may have been a consequence of the failure of palatial systems that themselves probably influenced a rising population earlier on. The areas that did best in postpalatial Greece seem largely to have been those that were not part of palatial states, or at least not directly integrated in them. Whether the collapse itself promoted these changes in the relative importance of areas, or was perhaps a consequence of people in these areas seeking opportunities themselves, is a matter of conjecture.

It seems that the collapse of the Mycenaean palace states fits into the patterns of collapse noted for other societies. Elites could move site due to dynastic quarrels or warfare while elements of the population could be driven away from areas that were no longer stable and which they could no longer farm, and towards areas that were more stable or prospering. However, detecting these kinds of movements in the postpalatial period is difficult due to the absence of any textual evidence that illuminates the situation in other societies. Interpreting the Aegean island sites, Cyprus and the Near East simply as refuge sites for fleeing Mycenaeans fails to take due account of parallel developments in those areas, although some movement, on a small scale is likely enough for those who were willing and able to attempt it.
6. POSPALATIAL RULERSHIP, ELITES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Introduction
As recently as 1985, Donlan (1985, 294) could state that: the almost barren archaeological record from 1200 to 1000 attests to a drastic decline... Given the extent of desolation and dislocation, little could have survived of earlier social institutions; and historians agree that whatever remained from the past (discontinuity is never total), the social history of Greece began anew after this violent chapter. Although the twelfth and eleventh centuries have been seen as the first two centuries of a Greek Dark Age, such a position may have been unduly negative even then, since Desborough (1964) had already demonstrated a final flourishing of Mycenaean culture, which is now widely accepted as an important and long-lasting phase in its own right (Thomatos 2006).

Since in material terms there are such clear cultural continuities from palatial to postpalatial times (Rutter 1992), it will be argued below that there are likely to have been other significant continuities in the sphere of non-material culture, that is in the relationships between people and groups and in the existence of stratified societies. Indeed, continuities in such visible arts as pictorial pottery, which flourished in LHIIIIC Middle, suggest that the postpalatial market for such items shared its tastes with those in earlier, yet quite different times, and we may suggest continuities in production skills, and networks of distribution, although these may have been modified to connect with markets in LHIIIIC. Some of these relationships between people and groups will have been based on pre-existing ones, however disruptive the collapse of the palaces was. In fact, accepting that the collapse was not instantaneous, but is much more likely to have occurred over some decades, gives much more allowance for the survival, adaptation and creation of networks and relationships throughout that period. This survival undoubtedly involved change, but this does not require any complete break.

The intention in this chapter is to examine the archaeological evidence for the existence of rulership and elites in the postpalatial period, as well as to examine the evidence for social structure and stratification more generally. Although rulership is perhaps too grand a term for the arrogation of power by individuals in the postpalatial world, it is meant in the sense of those who sought or claimed to lead others or to have some pre-eminence over them. In the first place, it will be necessary to discuss the terminology of power, since this provides one of the main arguments for continuity of rulership, in some form, from the palatial period into later Greece. Despite persistent valid criticism, it remains usual for this period to be discussed in relation to the Homeric poems, and the accounts of rulership and society that they provide. Needless to say, it is necessary to deal with these, in order to examine whether and in what way they can be useful. It will then be appropriate to turn to the archaeological evidence itself, and both settlement and funerary remains will be discussed, as well as other items of material culture, such as pictorial pottery. Finally, we will turn to a discussion of the oikos, before making some concluding remarks.

Wanax, qasireu and basileis
As noted in chapter 1, at least some Mycenaean palace states appear to have been headed by wanaktes. Although their precise role and duties are unclear, at Pylos, the wanax held the greatest amount of land recorded in the tablets, perhaps the basis of their power, and seems to have been involved in both military and religious activities. Although nothing is known of the arrangements for their succession or appointment, it seems generally presumed that these were the heads of royal dynasties, in a traditional sense. As to their style of rule, the layout and finds from palaces, as well as evidence from the Linear B tablets, would seem to suggest that they actively sought to involve and integrate members of the elite from around their kingdoms through feasting (Palaima 2004b), and thus it would seem that personal, face-to-face relationships were important in maintaining their authority and prestige. It seems they also sought to control and restrict access to certain resources, with the aim of maintaining their own status (Voutsaki 2001). Wanaktes were central to the palatial systems, which were presumably developed by their ancestors or forebears, and to some degree the success and survival of the polities as integrated units will have depended on the abilities and fortunes of individual wanaktes as well as the activities of others within and outside the kingdoms. In this, they will have faced similar difficulties to other rulers, as outlined in chapter 4.

The greatest consequence of the collapse of the palace states appears to be end of this system of palace based kingship, along with the rejection of wanax as a kingly title, to be replaced eventually by basileus, and this loss must have entailed the fragmentation of the relationships that had bound the systems together in particular regions. The word and derivative forms of it later appear only in a few particular usages. On Cyprus, it was retained for some members of the royal family, but not the king, who was termed basileus, as in other Greek areas (Iacovou 2006). In Homer, anax seems to retain some of its significance and is used, occasionally to refer to someone as lord of an area (e.g. Nestor as anax of Pylos, Iliad 2.77), or ‘lord of men’ (Iliad 1.506), but Yamagata argues (1997, 3-10) that, in the main, it occurs in the sense of ‘master of the house’, or as paterarch, patron or protector, or master of people or objects, and could be used in the vocative by a person to one of higher status or a god. She states that it is best seen, both in Linear B and in Homer, as denoting a relationship, rather than a function and notes that it later comes to be used only as a divine title (Yamagata 1997, 14).
It is difficult to give any chronology to these shifts because of the lack of textual sources, and it is not possible to conclude whether the use of derived forms on Cyprus is connected with any migration of Mycenaean royalty, or other Mycenaeans, who retained the title in their society. Given the likelihood that any migrations were most likely small-scale, and may be better placed in the eleventh rather the twelfth centuries, that would imply were most likely small-scale, and may be better placed in their society. Given the likelihood that any migrations royalty, or other Mycenaeans, who retained the title in Cyprus is connected with any migration of Mycenaean possible to conclude whether the use of derived forms on It is difficult to give any chronology to these shifts palatial ideology in which it had been embedded, only to have become progressively detached from the traditional Tiryns, which is discussed below. In that context, it could have been retained in a few places, perhaps claimed by those seeking power in order to legitimise their claims. This may be most probable at Tiryns, which is discussed below. In that context, it could have become progressively detached from the traditional palatial ideology in which it had been embedded, only to be discarded later on in favour of the term basileus, as the palatial world passed out of living memory.

The interpretation of the Mycenaean qasireu, as it occurs in Linear B, is far from clear-cut and this affects any argument for continuity of the term beyond c.1200 and its transformation into the basileus of later times (Morpurgo Davies 1979, 96). Like wanax, but unlike other terms for functionaries connected to the palaces, it seems to have a non Indo-European etymology (Palaima 1995, 122-123), although the inability to find an etymology need not hinder an interpretation of the function it designated (Lindgren 1979, 84). It is often suggested that it was incorporated from a pre-Greek language, and this may be significant (Palaima 1995, 125). Several interpretations of qasireu have been offered.

Ventris and Chadwick (1956, 172) suggested that it should be etymologically linked to the later Greek basileus and indicated local chiefs. However, as Lindgren (1979, 84) noted, ‘the equation with the classical basileus may be more or less misleading as to the interpretation of the real functions of the Linear B official thus named.’ Palmer (1963, 138, 227-228, 280, 283, 442) argued that since nearly all the instances of the term are connected with ‘manufacture’, it denoted a supervisor, ‘an official responsible for bronzemiths’ and that there was ‘nothing in the evidence available to take us outside the semantic field of ‘craftsmen’. However, he did note that a qasireu was also mentioned in Jo 438 as giving the same amount of gold as another palace ‘official’ a po-ro-ko-re-te (Palmer 1963, 228, 287). In any case, apart from the difference in meaning that he observes between the earlier and later terms, he stresses that the link with basileus is difficult on phonological and chronological grounds (Palmer 1963, 39; Morpurgo Davies 1979, 108).

Morpurgo Davies (1979, 98) avoided such a strict definition as Palmer, and suggested that the qasireu were very minor officers ‘who depended on the central authority but did not necessarily reside in the capital and could be dispatched to various places.’ In her view, qasireu were of a similar status to local officers po-ro-ko-re-te and acted as ‘supervisors’ (Morpurgo Davies 1979, 98-99 n. 40). Furthermore, despite Palmer’s caveats, she accepts the identification of qasireu with basileus and suggests that after the collapse of central power it is easy to see how ‘a minor officer could ‘pull rank’ and strengthen his authority’ (Morpurgo Davies 1979, 96, 98). This would have been done presumably through their links with workers and peasants, and the title qasireu would have become more important, eventually taking over the paramount status of wanax (Morpurgo Davies 1979, 96, 98-99 n.40). Thus implicitly she denies the title was already significant in the LBA. Palmer (1963, 228), despite his misgivings, has accepted that such a semantic shift is possible and has historical parallels. Nevertheless, it is not clear from Morpurgo Davies’ argument why it should have been the qasireu, rather than any other figure with authority, who was successful in arrogating power after the fall of the palaces, for surely other officers would also have had networks connecting them to potential support groups.

Gischnitzer argued that qasireu could have a generic meaning of ‘chief’, and to this Ruijgh added that it may also have been used in Mycenaean times for local princes or kinglets, both of which could explain the later use of the term (Morpurgo Davies 1979, 98-99 n.40; Palaima 2006, 54). Palaima (2006, 68) accepts that ‘the qasireu is a ‘local chieftain’ who is drawn into relations with the central palatial authority in specific circumstances.’ This explains their absence from ‘palatio-centric records… and … the ‘chain of administrative command’’ set up in Messenia. Although he follows Morpurgo Davies (1979), she did not explicitly argue that the qasireu was a local chief and, as noted above, doubted the initial significance of the title (Palaima 2006, 68).

Palaima’s arguments need to be considered more fully. He argues that qasireu was a non-Indo-European power term that became part of Greek when Indo-European speakers arrived and merged with the existing population (1995; 2006, 54). These figures ‘understandably survived… at the village level of social, economic and political organisation’ (Palaima 2006, 54). However one explains the Hellenisation of Greece, surely a long and complex process still going on in Archaic times, the argument for the continuation of qasireu as a pre-existing power term makes sense and helps to explain its uniqueness in comparison with terms for other officers more closely associated with the development of the
palatial system and which lost their significance with the end of the palaces (Palaima 2006, 68; Morpurgo Davies 1979, 98). These local figures would have been incorporated into palatial socio-economic structures in a two-way relationship, as is usual in expanding polities (Thomas 1995). Palaces will have relied on local authority figures and local figures may have increased their prestige due to links with palaces and participation in palatial ideologies. However, for much of the population, local figures may have remained far more visible and important than those from the palace, and these stronger local networks and relationships may be thought more likely to have survived the collapse of overarching palatial authority (Palaima 2004a, 269-270). Furthermore, whereas at least some palatial areas were headed by a wanaktes, other areas with important centres, such as Teikhos Dymaion, or Kanakia on Salamis, and other non-palatial areas may never have used the title. In many parts of Greece there had been no wanaktes to lose. It seems inherently likely, given the later use of the title and its use in Linear B, that gasireu were important local figures, who were already paramount in non-palatial areas, albeit on a smaller scale than the wanaktes, and whom in palatial areas had been absorbed into larger, more complex societies. This conclusion may be considered problematic by some, and is of course speculative, for there remains no way to prove such a hypothesis.

In summary, it seems plausible that the survival and significance of the unusual term basileus into later times in itself indicates that it was an important term earlier on, even if local gasireu in some areas were absorbed into an overarching palatial system and that in some areas their relative status in terms of the wanax was reduced. There is no contradiction in expecting these figures to have interacted with the palaces in palatial areas, fulfilling their obligations to the wanax, while in other areas they continued as independent local chiefs. It should of course be remembered that the Linear B tablets do not reveal everything about Mycenaean society. They are palace focused and restricted to particular palatial areas. The occurrences of gasireu in Linear B must be accepted as partial statements that do not reveal the full scope of activities of a person or their status outside of the administration. It is likely that, as local chiefs even those under the wanaktes will have retained their local status and close connections with their people, and quite probably they had some degree of autonomy. The collapse of the wider social and political networks of the palaces, and the failure and rejection of large scale wanax kingship would have provided an ideal context for gasireu in palatial areas to reassert their status as local paramount, no longer answerable to a higher power, whereas in non-palatial areas they would have continued in importance as before.

In fact, viewing the palace states in this way, as venues of elite interaction and competition, these relationships between local and central powers form a cleavage point, familiar from the discussion in chapter 4. Thus, it is quite plausible to hypothesise that palaces may have been unable to manage or satisfy local gasireu, and this would have promoted instability in the system and increased the likelihood of the break up of the palace states. This adds a new dimension to the argument that the palace states could have collapsed due to internal conflict. In this regard, it seems undeniable that gasireu of the LBA survived into postpalatial Greece and beyond as basileis, and as will be seen below, they have been identified in different ways in postpalatial Greece and associated with several sites and regions.

**Homer, basileis, oikoi and postpalatial Greek society**

Although it seems that social complexity and rulership, albeit at more local levels, continued after the collapse of the palaces and in formerly peripheral regions, the precise nature of rulership remains problematic (Eder 2006, 572). In Muhly’s words (2003, 24), what was missing was ‘not really the palace itself, but the sense of order and security that had been the gift of the palace administrations. What was missing in the ‘Dark Age’ was state organization—the framework and the structure that palace or state administration had bestowed upon everyday life’. Although this statement is best understood in regard to collapsed palace states, non-palatial areas were already organised differently, and non-state areas need not necessarily be dangerously insecure, unstable or unsuccessful. It is also necessary to add nuance to his statement in terms of how the actual day to day operation of the palace states is understood, since the discussion above implies that there may have been varying degrees of local autonomy in palace states, presumably to be understood as existing within a network of mutual obligations and relationships. In this sense, rather than the palaces states imposing order and stability, a situation of more or less successful and harmonious relationships can be understood to have characterised the successful period of the palace states’ existence.

It seems probable that the process of collapse and the eventual demise of the palace states stemmed from a breakdown in this situation, probably for a variety of reasons, and this will have created a less stable situation, quite possibly a much more volatile one for a while at least, involving fragmentation of states into more and smaller competing groups. This in itself could have led to a decline in population, provided a motive for people to migrate to more stable areas and a reduction in the standards of material culture, as is familiar from other collapses outlined in chapters 2 and 4. In order to explore the nature of postpalatial society and the style of rulership that may have operated in it, it has been traditional to turn to Homer to illustrate the nature of the basileis, and as a result this warrants discussion here. The literature on Homer is vast, and a highly selective approach is necessarily taken here.

It is often still assumed that Homer can be used as a guide to Mycenaean Greece (e.g. Castleden 2005), yet this is
fraught with difficulties. It has been pointed out by many scholars that the poems incorporate details from various periods, and that they cannot be simply taken as a reliable guide to any of them (Lorimer 1950; Dickinson 1986; Sherratt 1990). Certainly, even if there are accurate descriptions of artefacts that have been found in the archaeological record, these details go no way towards proving the veracity of the narrative, but arguably there is content of value in reconstructing social history (Finley 1964). Several scholars argue that there are quite convincing reasons for accepting that many parts of the poem best suit the archaeology of the postpalatial period and the Early Iron Age, and that this may be the period that contributed most to them (Finley 1977; Dickinson 1986; Sherratt 1990). In fact, it may be possible to accept some aspects of Homer’s description of basileis and Homeric society as reflecting the realities of postpalatial society on the basis of analogy, rather than attempting any finer conclusions. The rest of this section will briefly outline something of the nature of Homeric basileis, before the archaeological evidence is discussed below.

In the Iliad, Agamemnon is referred to as basileus more often than any other character, but his position as leader of the Greek ‘army’ (not the Greek people), is due to his greater individual wealth and power, his patronage by the gods including his possession of a sceptre, and by the consent of the numerous other basileis, rather than any particular legal status (Yamagata 1997, 11; Dickinson 1986, 34). As such, basileis like Achilles were able to withdraw support if they felt slighted, since the relationship relied on mutual right treatment. Yamagata (1997, 10) rightly notes that basileis occupied a variety of levels, and this will have depended on their wealth, connections, and achievements, and to some extent on their lineage, and thus some were ‘more basileus’ than others. In fact, it may be better not to regard Homeric basileis as kings in any straightforward sense. For example, when Agamemnon left for war, he left behind no steward of his kingdom but rather only a minstrel to guard his wife, which led to plotting, faction, strife and murder (Odyssey 3.262-275). It might be supposed that Homer had little knowledge of kingship but was more familiar with a situation in which there was a group of more powerful individuals, whose power was based on the wealth of their household (oikos), their connections through gift-giving and receiving, their activities and abilities and who shared an elite culture. Such a picture of rulership may in fact fit the immediate postpalatial period quite well, as well as also being appropriate for the EIA (Eder 2006, 570-572).

The situation described on Ithaca reinforces the view of competing basileis. While some interpret Odysseus as king of Ithaca (Yamagata 1997, 11), his position is clearly rather one of local supremacy amongst a group of competing basileis on the island and is directly comparable to the supremacy of Agamemnon amongst the leaders of the Greek army. While Odysseus’ father Laertes had seemingly once been pre-eminent in the region (Odyssey 24.378), he is constantly referred to in the Odyssey as either hero or old man (e.g. Odyssey 14.9), and it is clear that Odysseus took over his position as basileus as Laertes became physically unable to fulfil that role. Equally, in the absence of Odysseus, Telamachus was not yet strong enough, physically or otherwise, to compete with the other basileis, who, in consuming his oikos, were undermining his potential status (Odyssey 1.248). Although one of the suitors, Antinous suggests that the ‘kingship’ (βασιλεία) of Ithaca belonged to Telamachus by birth (Odyssey 1.386), his ability to occupy that role would have depended on his survival, and the survival of his oikos. It is perfectly plausible that one of the powerful suitors could have become pre-eminent by murdering Telamachus and/or destroying his household, or taking over his household by marrying Penelope. In a similar sense, Agesthus was able to become pre-eminent while Agamemnon was absent, albeit temporarily, by marrying Clytemnestra (Odyssey 3.263-275).

It seems clear then, that Homeric basileis were less than kings, but nevertheless were pre-eminent figures some of whom were more important than others (Halverson 1992, 181-183). Furthermore, these basileis did not seem to be vital for society to operate; despite their importance and influence, they did not govern in any kingly fashion and in their absence life seems to have carried on. In fact, there is an absence of any kind of notion of states in the Homeric poems (Halverson 1986), and the world is rather one of communities made up of different groups including slaves, peasants and a large class of nobles based in oikoi. This might well fit a view of postpalatial Greece, with competing households, without a monarchy, state or even the necessity for high politics in a formal sense, but nevertheless with successfully functioning communities. This could be squared with the archaeological evidence reviewed below.

Something more should be said of the roles, activities and interests of the Homeric basileis, for this too is thought to be applicable for rulership in the postpalatial period in representing what could be termed a heroic society (Eder 2006, 570-572). As noted above, the basis for the basileis was their individual wealth, based primarily on the oikos, or household. Land could be won for the oikos, either in a direct sense by farming it, or by receiving it as a prize of honour (Odyssey 24.205-212). Slaves also formed part of the household, and these could be purchased or won (Odyssey 1.429-433). A focus on accruing wealth in terms of gifts to increase the substance and prestige of the oikos and the individual was a vital concern (Odyssey 11.355-361). Gift-giving and hospitality played an important role in developing and maintaining relationships between prominent individuals and families, and giving and receiving reflected status (Odyssey 8.389ff).

Another aspect of this is reflected in the recognition of heroic ancestry (Iliad 6.145-234). On the active side, basileis engaged in warfare and raiding, and this was perhaps the main way to win status and booty,
which could be collected and redistributed through gift-giving. Trade is less prominent in the poems, though it is notable that there was perhaps little difference between trade and piracy (Odyssey 9.252-255). This may suggest an opportunistic and adventurous approach to gaining wealth. Other reflections of elite status are found in a general concern with physical prowess both martial and athletic (Odyssey 8.159), in hunting (Odyssey 19.428ff.), as well as physical beauty and the possession of skills applicable to all aspects of life from farming and building to storytelling, intelligence, oratory and persuasion. The funeral of Patroclus (Iliad 23), with its athletic contests including a chariot race, boxing, wrestling, running and others, and his public cremation and the heaping up of a mound suggest yet another public venue for the interaction of the elite, combining many of the interests mentioned above. The funeral itself may be most reminiscent of the wealthy early tenth century burial at the Heroön at Lefkandi, with its cremation and deposition of the male’s ashes in a bronze amphora, accompanied by horse sacrifices, although there are some differences, including the burial in a house replica and the female companion (Dickinson 2006a, 190-191). Earlier postpalatial cremations, including those associated with warrior burial (discussed below) could also be viewed in this way.

Eder (2006, 570-572) argues that there is significant continuity in elite lifestyle between 1200 and 700, and that this is reflected in the similarity of the themes in pictorial pottery of LHIIIC and LG. To some degree, this must also incorporate the notion that there were similarities between elite lifestyles and concerns before 1200, and this is not particularly surprising, even though the scale of power underwent a significant reduction. It should be noted that martial scenes and particularly scenes of ship battles, became more common in LHIIIC. Rystedt (1999) argues that these similarities between the LBA and EIA, specifically representations of the gesture of female lamentation and *apobates* games involving chariots and running, probably owe more to the maintenance of living traditions rather than inspiration from epic poetry. It is notable that some aspects of the lifestyle of the Homeric *basileis* can be illustrated by LHIIIC pictorial pottery, and incidentally the continued ideological importance of chariots is demonstrated by their retention as an important theme.

It seems then, that Homeric *basileis* can be plausibly interpreted as members of an elite, distinguished from others primarily by wealth, status and achievement and the social networks they participated in and also by membership of a prominent family. Much of the modern discussion has been focussed on the classification of *basileis*, as kings, chiefs, aristocrats or big men. As has been argued, it is difficult to view them straightforwardly as kings, in any proper institutional sense, or even ruling in a kingly way. Because of this, and the Homeric emphasis on achievement, some have favoured a big man model derived from the anthropology of Melanesia (Hall 2007, 122-125). This has been summarised as ‘a state of being which people attain through their own deeds’ (Thomas and Conant 1999, 52). As such, it is not ascriptive, not a hereditary or elective office, but an achieved status. Eriksen (2001, 166) describes this situation in Melanesia:

Within every village there is competition between men who wish to be ‘big men’; who aspire to make decisions on behalf of the village and wish to be respected and powerful. Such a status is acquired through the exchange of gifts with a large number of people, thereby creating ties of mutual obligation with as many persons as possible. A ‘big man’ should therefore have many relatives and several wives as a starting-point for his networking. When an established ‘big man’ dies, a new group of younger men will start competing to build similar positions.

A big man may further seek influence in surrounding communities in similar ways although by doing this may risk losing his position by destabilising his local support base (Eriksen 2001, 166). These societies are argued to commonly occur when ‘there is a low population and a relative abundance of land or other vital resources’ (Thomas and Conant 1999, 52) although Eriksen (2001, 167) notes that an important distinction between big man societies and those with ascriptive, hereditary political power is the production of a big enough surplus ‘to make a division of labour possible where a segment of the population does not need to engage in agriculture.’ Thus it is the aims and level of agricultural production, that is subsistence or something more that is the point, with less intensive agriculture and an arguably more egalitarian society more likely to produce big men.

The Homeric poems, however, do place some emphasis on prominent ancestors, and the potential to inherit status, thus the big man model cannot be regarded as wholly accurate in describing the *basileis*. Since *basileis* survived the collapse of the palaces, some power structures and social networks will have survived with them. Postpalatial rulership was not a tradition without roots that developed in a society reduced to complete or near egalitarianism, and thus some principle of hereditary power was likely to have played a role. Nevertheless, the postpalatial world may have been one in which big men could have arisen to compete with others, and *basileis* will have needed to compete and achieve to maintain their positions, whatever advantage their family heritage may have provided.

The *oikos* or household has been noted as the ‘fundamental social unit’ of Archaic and early Greek society (Donlan 1985, 300) and Rystedt (1999, 94 n.18) has likewise suggested that ‘the family/oikos functioned as an important entity already in the Bronze Age’. Maran (2006, 125), following Kilian and Deger-Jalkotzy, supports the idea that the new architectural layout of The Lower Citadel and Town of postpalatial Tiryns, with their courtyard houses, represents the emergence of
especially at Tiryns, but also in former peripheral areas
2006, 127). This case for continuity seems likely enough,
under the shadow of the former palace authority (Maran
groups but rather the emergence of these groups from
This emergence is not to be seen as the creation of new
areas where no palaces collapsed and depopulation seems less
developed an interesting and unusual hypothesis which
suggests ‘much more structural continuity between Late
Bronze Age Greece and the later periods of Greek social
development than many assume.’ He argues that the
palace societies of LBA Greece, in particular Pylos, do
not easily fit into definitions of chiefdoms, states, early
state modules or feudal societies but rather resemble
lineage units, some of which managed to become
dominant and influence other areas (Small 1998, 289;
1999). In his view this explains the lack of general
taxation, a controlling administration and the failure to
The collapse involved the reduction in scale of these oikoi
and more significant changes in the leading units which
‘lost their scribal recording systems… But all in all, the
oikos remained. With its interest in its own estate and its
need for retainers, the oikos spanned the collapse of the
Late Bronze Age in the Greek Aegean’ (Small 1998,
289).

The hypothesis that oikoi retained control of land through
the collapse and later, in the terms argued by Small
(1998), has been criticised by Dickinson (2006a, 248)
who comments that this argument ‘seems to
underestimate the degree of disturbance associated with the
Collapse and the Postpalatial Period.’ However, while
this may be generally true, especially in the long term,
and in certain parts of Greece, perhaps Messenia and
southern Greece and some other formerly palatial areas, it
would seem likely that in some places this control was
retained, although wider territorial control probably
became less evident. Here a distinction can be made
between the major palace sites and smaller sites.
Foxhall (1995, 247) has argued for different kinds of
postpalatial activity dependent on a site or area’s relations
with former palaces. She rightly suggests that ‘political,
economic and social relationships’ to former palaces will
have changed drastically but that ‘underlying social
values and political structures (especially notions of who
could claim to be members of the elite) continued
(Foxhall 1995, 247). In the postpalatial period, local elites
may have fared best at retaining their own basis for
survival. At least, such may have been the case for a time,
but the apparent increasing fragmentation and continued
destructions late in LHIIIIC pose problems in the
transition to the EIA.

Since it seems unlikely that the Homeric epics represent a
single historically operative society (Dickinson 2006a,
111), attempting to press them for a precise or entirely
coherent picture of society or rulership is unnecessary,
although the Homeric basileus may have some
similarities with figures of the postpalatial period. In
addition, attempting to categorise basileis too precisely is
unlikely to be helpful; we might think of them simply as
significant figures who claimed some higher status than
others through their actions or heritage; classification is
merely a tool for understanding, not in all cases an end in
itself. Even so, the variety and fluidity of positions may
be best understood in the context of the postpalatial
world, in which the renegotiation of relationships in a
society that had undergone, and continued to undergo
significant changes. The rest of this chapter will discuss
the archaeological evidence for rulership and elites in
postpalatial Greece.

Continuity and change at Tiryns
Despite the widespread destructions that mark the
collapse there was no ‘irreversible breakdown of society’
and different sites show various degrees of activity in the
aftermath (Dickinson 2006a, 60). Tiryns is notable in this
regard for continued research there has significantly
changed the once accepted picture of postpalatial decline
(Maran 2002, 223). In fact, Tiryns may have expanded in
the twelfth century to rival any of the earlier palatial
centres, covering some 25 hectares, although there is
some suggestion that parts of the LHIIB town may have
been buried under flood deposits (Thomatos 2005, 78 and
1 fig. 3; Maran 2002, 223). Construction and rebuilding
took place in several areas (Figure 6.1). The fortification
wall was repaired, and in the Lower Town, to the north
and south of the acropolis, houses with paved areas and
courtyards were constructed. These showed several
occupation phases, 2 in LHIIIC Early, the second ending
with fire, and at least 3 more, the last still falling in
LHIIIC Middle (Maran 2002, 223). In the Lower Citadel
more than 30 new rooms and buildings were constructed
within a system of streets and courtyards with workshops,
storage areas and a shrine (Kilian 1988a, 135).

Perhaps most significant in terms of rulership are the
changes on the Upper Citadel, where a narrow megaron,
Building T, was built over the eastern part of the earlier
Great Megaron (Figure 6.2; Maran 2001). This building
is now securely dated to the 12th century, although it is
impossible to be more precise (Maran 2002, 114). At the
same time, the round altar in the Great Court seems to
have been partially dismantled and replaced by a square
platform-like structure (Maran 2002, 115). The recovery
and continued activity at Tiryns certainly suggests the
presence of a continued complex organisation that wished
to retain the prominence of the site and their association
with it. That this was possible suggests that there was no
catastrophic drought or famine in the area that prevented
continued habitation in the area.
Maran (2000; 2001; 2006) has noted the significance of Building T and other features of postpalatial Tiryns for the nature of rulership at this time and suggests a degree of continuity, based on the selective revival of palatial ideology, but also change apparent in the abandonment of some features. Building T reused the focal area of palatial power at Tiryns, the Upper Citadel and specifically the area of the Great Megaron, as well as the megaron form itself, although it was not identical to its predecessor (Maran 2000, 2; Maran 2001, 117). The room itself was shorter and narrower than the palatial megaron, although it conspicuously retained the earlier throne emplacement. The large central hearth with its four columns was abandoned and instead the room was divided into two aisles, separated by a new row of columns aligned with two of the earlier columns. A storage facility consisting of at least 12 pithoi has also been noted as probably belonging to the same period (Maran 2001, 118). There are two other buildings in the Lower Town at Tiryns, which have been interpreted as of high status (Maran 2006, 126; Thomatos 2006, 195). In the north-eastern sector, there is a LHIIIIC Early-Middle building divided by multiple rows of columns and in the south-eastern sector, the LHIIIIC Middle Megaron W. In the Lower Citadel, the LHIIIIC Middle Room 115, which may have had cultic functions, has also been considered important (Maran 2006, 127; Thomatos 2006, 191). It is hard to underemphasise these developments for considering the nature of social complexity in postpalatial Greece.
Although Tiryns offers the greatest insight into such developments due to the amount of evidence available, there are developments elsewhere that hint at a more wide-spread, if selective continuity. At Midea, the megaron built in LHIIIB and destroyed by earthquake (part of the building sank by up to a metre) at the end of that period was repaired and reused in LHIIIC (Figure 6.3 left; Walberg 1995, 87). As at Tiryns the LHIIIC megaron did not include a central hearth surrounded by four columns as it had in LHIIIB, but rather was divided into two parts by a row of three central columns. It is not known whether the earlier megaron had a throne emplacement but it seems that the LHIIIC megaron did not. There are fragments of fresco but it is unclear from the context whether these belong to LHIIIB or LHIIIC. House L at Korakou (Figure 6.3 right) follows a similar plan, although it has a central hearth. It is unclear, however, precisely which period this building belongs to. Walberg (1995, 89), following Hiesel, places it in LHIIIB with change and reuse in LHIIIC, as at Midea, while Wright (2006, 40) mentions it only in a LHIIIC context. Thomatos (2006, 199) follows Rutter in suggesting that this building, and Houses H (which also had an aisle) and O at Korakou were abandoned 'either just before or during IIIC early.' However, House P (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.14), with its central hearth, was in use in LHIIIC Middle, and may belong exclusively to this period. Megarons have also been identified at Ayios Kosmas, Mouriatadha, Asine, and Lefkandi (Wright 2006, 40).

At Mycenae there was also continuity of occupation in the citadel (figure 6.4 left), although due to later building this is less clear than at Tiryns (French 2002, 138). It is possible that there may be a high status building, Palace VI (figure 6.4 right), built partially over the remains of the earlier megaron and Great Court at Mycenae, although this did not incorporate the earlier buildings and was built on a different orientation to the palatial megaron (French 2002, 136-138). The identification of this building as a postpalatial structure is not certain, and it has been considered to date to the Geometric period.
Tsountas noted that the pottery found appeared to be of ‘geometric type [his italics] with designs of animals and birds, but in the lower burnt layers and where there were no later walls all the finds were of the Mycenaean style,’ but despite the contrast with Mycenaean style pottery French comments that in 1886 this could have meant he was describing pictorial pottery of LHIIC Middle (French 2002, 137-138). In her view, the confirmation of a twelfth century date for Building T at Tiryns supports a postpalatial date for the structure at Mycenae. There are also fragments of fresco from the Hellenistic Tower Epichosis, south of the Citadel House, which French and Lakovidis suggest belong to the postpalatial period, although this view is perhaps not widely accepted (Thomatos 2006, 184; Dickinson pers.comm.).

Nevertheless, there is LHIIC material from several areas of the citadel, notably the Lion Gate, the Granary, the Citadel House area, the House of Columns, the House of the Warrior Vase, and Houses C, D, M, N and H (Figure 6.4 left), which attests to the continued use of the site, as does the continued use of the chamber tomb cemetery (French 2002, 135-140; Thomatos 2006, 179). The fact that postpalatial Mycenae experienced several destructions (the last being c.1075) could suggest that it remained important enough to be attacked, although earthquakes could have been responsible for these (French 2002, 10, 135, 140). While Thomatos suggests (2006, 186) that ‘probably, given that no major LHIIC building activities have been recognised, one can reasonably assume that no central governing body existed at Mycenae,’ French notes (2002, 140) of the recuperation into LHIIC Middle that ‘it is clear that there must have been some kind of governance.’

The Hellenistic Tower Epichosis had five floor layers from throughout LHIIC along with a LHIIC Middle circular hearth and House M, with its storage facilities, courtyards and rooms was in use until the end of LHIIC (French 2002, 95; Thomatos 2006, 183-184). The finds of high quality pottery from the Citadel House, including pictorial pottery, area does suggest that ‘the middle phase of LHIIC [was]… of major importance at Mycenae’ and the Khania tumulus, c.1125 may confirm the presence of some local power (Crouvel 1991, 32; French 2002, 10, 136, 140).

These sites and structures are undoubtedly significant, but in the absence of texts, and often with difficulties in clearly understanding the archaeology, their interpretation is somewhat unclear. Furthermore, it could be likely that there were different developments across Greece, as increased localism became a more prominent feature. Nevertheless, Walberg (1995, 89) notes that:

While LHIIB megaras have a central hearth surrounded by four columns or roof supports, the LHIIC megaras have a row of roof supports along the central axis and the hearth, even though it exists in some cases, no longer seems to be important.

It has been argued that an important part of the ideology of palatial kingship was the focus on the megaron and large central hearth, which has been termed the ‘Hearth-wanax Ideology’ (Kilian 1988b; Maran 2001, 116). In Kilian’s view, the throne emplacement formed the focal point of official Mycenaean religion and the megaron itself is usually considered as a venue for ritual action and feasting connected to the ruler (Maran 2001, 116). Walberg (1995) suggests that there was a significant change in the ceremonies that were carried out. In particular, she links the changes in architectural form and the unimportance of hearths with changes in drinking kits observed by Podzuweit, which he suggests indicate a change in ritual and perhaps in social structure (Walberg 1995, 90). Arguments that focus on the use of aisles to divide LHIIC megarons into two halves, relating this to bipartite palatial megaron units are not convincing, since the it has been shown that many sites had one or three megarons and in any case the significance of secondary megarons remains unclear. Walberg has suggested (1995, 91) that it is more likely that each aisle was used for the cult of a particular deity, or as a reception hall for a dignitary, or perhaps both. On practical grounds, however, this could seem unlikely, given the narrowness of the megaron at Midea (7.5m), which might imply that the space was not subdivided. At Tiryns, Building T was narrower (c.5m) such an arrangement would ignore the throne emplacement, which rather awkwardly faced a column. Wright (2006, 40) suggests that only some, Midea, Tiryns and Mouriatadha, were the seats of rulers.

Kilian (1980) proposed that successors to the wanax continued to rule at postpalatial Tiryns and Maran (2001, 121) has recently reasserted this possibility, mainly on the basis of the continued focus on the throne emplacement in Building T. He suggests that a noble family was able to create ‘a kind of dynasty’ at Tiryns, although the ruler was weaker than before (Maran 2006, 144). In this context, Building T could have served as a communal hall, in which gatherings under the direction of a ruler took place (Maran 2006, 126). The association of Building T with the remodelled circular altar in the Great Court suggests some continued functional link with important ceremonies of some kind, although how similar these were to palatial era ceremonial cannot be known. The new postpalatial features on the Upper Citadel at Tiryns are unlikely to represent an inhabited palace, given that they were isolated buildings constructed amongst the remains of the earlier complex. Similar partial abandonments have been noted at Mycenae and Midea (Dickinson 2006a, 60). This is significant in itself since it could indicate the absence of a single ruling family, and while plausible, it is by no means clear that there was a single ruler at postpalatial Tiryns. The other changes in the site need to be taken into account since they must have some bearing on this.

The new constructions elsewhere at Tiryns, in the form of courtyard houses, have been interpreted as the creations...
of elite families, perhaps representing the emergence of competing independent and self-sufficient families or oikoi (Maran 2006, 125). However, there is no reason to suppose that these strong families were new features of the postpalatial era, although their existence may have been obscured by the dominance of the wanax in palatial times. It may be likely that they had something to do with the collapse of palatial power, for reasons set out in chapter 4. Maran (2006, 126-127) seems right to suggest that they represent an ‘internal restructuring of occupation in Tiryns’ in which an upper class ‘claimed areas in the surrounding of the citadel for themselves, and articulated their new self-confidence by the construction of new, and in some cases, impressive living quarters.’ Indeed, the difference is stark between a palatially monopolised centre and one that is multiply occupied.

The new LHIIIIC building developments that benefited from the earlier construction of the Kofini dam seem to have ‘followed a carefully planned lay-out’, with simultaneous construction in different areas following similar orientations (Maran 2006, 126). While this suggests obvious organisation and mobilisation of resources and labour, it would seem to suggest a cooperative venture. If these were the new dwellings of an elite, it does not exclude the possibility that there was a ruler, but would suggest some weakness, for it might be expected that a strong ruler would have sought to dominate the citadel. While Maran has suggested (2006, 142) that Megaron W, in the Lower Town, may have been the residence of the ruling family, it could be that rulership or the dominance of any particular family was temporary and not strongly dynastic. If that was the case, it would suggest a very decreased distance between members of the elite. It is not implausible that there may have been a more oligarchical rule that could have included periods of individual dominance. Building T, the altar and Great Court could have been a venue for communal elite activities. Such a situation could be thought to reflect the competitive situation of local basileis, outlined above, and seems to suggest a very deliberate rejection of the previous order.

The evidence outlined above demonstrates significant continuity from the palatial era into postpalatial times, although there were major changes including the end of large-scale kingship and wanax ideology and at Tiryns it seems this could have been replaced by a more oligarchical system. Walberg (1995, 91), focussing on Midea and the structural changes to LHIIIIC megarons in general, also suggest ‘the emergence of a new type of social organization, perhaps focussed on two persons or two groups in a leading position.’ While specific aspects of wanax and palatial ideology do seem to have been rejected, Wright nonetheless comments (2006, 41) that LHIIIIC megarons show a concern with traditional social practices and there may be a continued link with religion. Shifts in local power relationships and the relative importance of sites may be visible in the seemingly increased relative importance of Tiryns, but it remains plausible to suggest that rulership continued on a smaller scale in various areas, and this could have contributed to continuing instability in the postpalatial period. It seems likely enough that prominent families would have vied for power and influence and perhaps that no single family was able to achieve any long-lasting dominance. In this context, it is quite possible that basileus became the title of choice, although wanax may have been retained in particular places and contexts, but that remains speculation.

**Warrior Burials, Tumuli and Cremation**

The above section focussed on the palatial Mycenaean heartland, but, as has been emphasised, in palatial times Mycenaean Greece was not entirely palatial. Though we might expect the existence and operation of palaces to have affected other areas, whether directly or indirectly, other social systems co-existed with the palaces within the Mycenaean cultural zone (Eder 2007; Dickinson 1994, 78). Nevertheless, Eder (2007) has proposed that the crisis that affected the palaces ‘was of vital importance to the peripheral regions of the Mycenaean world.’ Some areas, such as Achaea and the Ionian Islands, the Cyclades and the Dodecanese seem to have benefited from the demise of the palatial centres as demonstrated by an increase in deposited wealth (Voutsaki 2001, 208-210). Although both Eder (2007, 5, 10) and Voutsaki (2001, 210-211) have argued for palatial control of some of these areas, even if there were connections for specific reasons, which is likely enough, these areas cannot be considered as palatial in any meaningful sense, and no doubt had their own organisational and social traditions. In such places, where there had been no palaces and no wanax ideology, we should not expect to see similar strategies of rulership in the postpalatial period as at Tiryns and the Argolid, and it must be remembered that the term postpalatial in these areas simply refers to chronology. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify indications of social ranking and attempts at differentiation in the archaeological record.

Although ‘there is no transformation in Mycenaean funeral practices when the palace system collapses,’ one notable change in burial practice during the postpalatial period is the increase in the number of warrior or weapon burials (Figure 6.5; Deger-Jalkotzy 2006; Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 95, 135; Dickinson 2006a, 73-74). These are found concentrated in particular in Achaea, although they have also been found as far north as Hexalophos, at Perati in Attica, in the Cyclades, Dodecanese and Crete (Papadopoulos 1999; Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 154-155, Figs 9.2-9.3; Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 95). This distribution largely coincides with regions that never developed or adopted a palatial system. The discussion of warrior burials in this section will focus on those in Achaea, with other examples from the Aegean being discussed further below.
Warrior burials are characterised by the deposition of goods with ‘a pronounced military character and symbolism’ and could include swords, often Naue Type II, at least one spearhead and a knife as well as bronze greaves, shield-bosses and plates of boar’s tusk, that may have decorated helmets (Figure 6.6; Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 152; Dickinson 2006a, 74).

Figure 6.5 LHIIIIC warrior tombs on the mainland (top) and in the Aegean (bottom). 1 Patra-Klauss; 2 Krini; 3 Monodendri-Hagios Konstantinos; 4 Kallitheas-Spenzes; 5 Kallitheas-Langanidia; 6 Louiska-Spaliareika; 7 Kangadi; 8 Portes; Nikoleika; 10 Palaiokastro; 11 Kephallonia/Lakkithra; 12 Kephallonia/Dhiakata; 13 Delphi; 14 Hexalophos; 15 Perati; 16 Naxos/Grotta-Aplomata; 17 Naxos/Grotta-Kamini; 18 Kos/Langada; 19 Rhodes/Passia; 20 Crete/Mouliana; 21 Crete/Praisos-Foutoula; 22 Crete/Myrsini. Source: Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 154-155, Figures 9.2 and 9.3.

Figure 6.6 Warrior burial at Krini chamber tomb 3. Bronze sword in scabbard (top); bronze decoration on scabbard (middle); bronze spearhead (bottom). Source: Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, 175 Figure 3, 181 Figure 6 and 183 Figure 7.
Burials took the form of inhumation or sometimes cremation and used traditional types of tomb, occurring with other burials. At Krini, for example, there were four bodies interred in the upper level of chamber tomb 3, but only one was a warrior burial (burial D) (Figure 6.7). Chronologically, they mostly belong to LHIIIC Middle or Late, although T.21 at Langada: Kos and T.2 Burial 1 at Lousika-Spaliareika date to LHIIIC Early (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 170-171, Table 9.3). It seems likely that these represent an ‘attempt to assert status’ (Dickinson 2006a, 181) in particular because they are a minority and differentiated from the majority of burials by the type of goods deposited (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 152, 175). Deger-Jalkotzy argues (2006, 176) that ‘LHIIIC warrior tombs may be viewed as the funerary monument of individuals who held, or were entitled to hold the title of basileus and to obtain the position of a political leader, if not of a petty king or prince.’

LHIIIC warrior burials have been interpreted as reflecting ‘the deep-rooted change in social organisation and economy caused by the demise of the palatial system’ (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 173). Military prowess, actual or ideological, may have been a defining factor in the social and political arena and scenes of warfare, ship use, and other heroic pursuits, such as hunting, are depicted on pictorial pots, especially in LHIIIC Middle (Figure 6.8; Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 174; Dickinson 2006a, 70; Eder 2006, 553-554).

These concerns in fact suggest a degree of continuity from palatial to postpalatial times in terms of the link between power and ‘an ideology of militarism’ (Mee 2008, 335) and even chariots continue to be depicted, even if no. The major difference would seem to be an increased concern with depicting soldiers and naval battles, which may reflect the reality of life or elite concerns in LHIIIC Middle (Deger-Jalkotzy 2008, 404-405). Certainly the production of this kind of pottery demonstrates a continued market whose tastes the pottery catered for. Pictorial pottery was produced at Mycenae, Tiryns, Lefkandi, Athens, Volos, Naxos and Kos and in western Asia Minor at Bademgedigi Tepe and has been found at other sites such as Kynos and in Messenia and Achaea (Mountjoy 1993, 98; Mountjoy 2005; Eder 2006, 554). This distribution covers formerly palatial areas as
well as non-palatial areas and suggests some common ideological ground that may fairly represent the scope of activities of basileis.

Nevertheless, whether warrior burials and the ideology that they represent owe a large cultural debt specifically to the collapse of the palaces, as Deger-Jalkotzy has suggested, is questionable. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, while some burials belong in LHIIIC Early, most were later. Second is their distribution in areas that were never palatial. So far, no warrior burials have been found in the Argolid, although Type II swords and pictorial pottery representing ‘heroic’ ideals were present (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 168). Deger-Jalkotzy (2006, 168) suggests that this is probably a reflection of the current state of research, rather than the absence of such practices. While this remains to be seen, it could be suggested that the absence of warrior burials in fact reflects a different style of display and different socio-political circumstances, and this is what may be expected in areas that had different developmental trajectories. Maran (2006) noted that at Tiryns particular aspects of the palatial past seem to have been used to create a new elite identity, but, in areas that had not been palatial there were no similar features to draw upon and we would not expect similarity as a matter of course. Developments may rather be expected to be based on local traditions.

A similar explanation may fit for Messenia, Boeotia and the Volos area, rather than resorting to chronic depopulation as an explanation (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 167-168). For Messenia, the few signs of LHIIIC activity suggest clustering around the former palace, while pictorial pottery shows similar ‘heroic’ scenes as that from the Argolid and Achaea and the continued interest in and use of ships suggests continued organisation and mobilisation of resources (Eder 2006, 550-554), although this evidence is limited to one pot from one tomb. The reuse of the Tragana Tholos 1, near Pylus, for continuous burials from LHIIIC down to the tenth and ninth centuries may show a desire to arrogate status, although this tomb is noted for holding at least 30 burials, which may reflect a new pattern of use (Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 96 and n.53; Eder 2006, 550; Dickinson 2006a, 180).

Weapons burials continued sporadically, outlasting the postpalatial period, and came to be used in different areas. At Tiryns, two iron daggers (the larger was 31cm in length) were found in tomb 28, and should date to before c.1050 and weapons burials also occurred at the Kerameikos in Athens (Snodgrass 2000, 221-222). The later spread of warrior burials into Messenia and other areas and their persistence into PG and G indicates the success and wider acceptance of this method of display, and this is especially likely as the memory of the palaces receded from those areas that had had them (Eder 2006, 564). Whitley notes (2001, 187) that warrior graves were ‘one of the major features of Early Iron Age burial practices’ although they disappeared from areas that developed polis societies in the eighth and seventh centuries while being retained in areas characterised by different forms of political organisation. It seems likely that their occurrence may indicate, even in LHIIIC, ‘a shared symbolic order where masculinity and warfare are closely connected’ but nevertheless they do not seem to have ever been significant in number nor particularly lavish or wealthy, which could indicate something like a big man society, where status could be achieved (Whitley 2001, 97-98).

At Louiska-Spaliareika in Achaea, however, there were three generations of warrior type cremations in Tomb 2 from LHIIIC Early onwards, which has been interpreted as suggesting a possible hereditary status or at least a continued claimed prominence (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 158). This tomb was also unusual in that it was the largest of its group, although other graves were well furnished with other kinds of goods. However, it appears that while this could certainly indicate the existence of a powerful and long-lived local family, this was not the norm for warrior burials. Furthermore, the burials may not represent a family, but individuals capitalising on the status of others. A safer conclusion is that this exceptional tomb indicates that situations in local areas could differ, and that sometimes status could be claimed or passed on in some sense, perhaps familial. This might be thought to fit with a view of Homeric basileis.

The concentration of warrior burials in LHIIIC Achaea has already been noted and requires some comment. It has been interpreted as reflecting a need for protection and defence following the palatial collapse and/or the rise of a new social class ‘whose power was not inherited from the preceding period but was based on military preparation and organisation’ (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 168-169). However, it is not clear that such an interpretation is necessary, in particular because it is uncertain what effects the collapse of the palaces would have had on the local elite. Although Eder (2007) has argued that the region may have been controlled by a palace, this remains speculative, and any kind of relationship that existed need not have been coercive nor had any particular impact on local power structures. This area had its own systems of non-palatial organisation and although the increase in warrior burials may indicate a shift in how ranking was displayed in LHIIIC, it remains likely that existing tradition played its part. For example, a tholos tomb used from LHIII-LHIIIC at Kalithea: Laganida was the nucleus of a cemetery and may also represent some status differentiation (Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 62, 81). Continuity is further demonstrated by cemeteries such as that at Ano Sychaina, in use from LHIIIA1 to LHIIIC Late (Mountjoy 1999, 400). Papazoglou-Manioudaki notes (1994, 200) that ‘relative prosperity and cultural unity were… maintained from the end of LHIIIB onwards and throughout the whole of LHIIIC.’ Changing representations of power need not mean that power or structure itself has changed. Since the collapse of the palaces probably meant less stability in...
Figure 6.9 Tumulus at Argos, Tripolis Street (a & b). Khania tumulus, near Mycenae (c). Sources: Thomatos 2006, 151-152 Figures 2.2 and 2.3; French 2002 Plate 21.
Greece in general, the increase of warrior burials as a reflection of martial prowess is understandable, but it should not be seen in terms of palatial heritage nor need it be seen as the rise of a new class, without links to preceding periods. In fact, given the limited number of warrior burials, Deger-Jalkotzy (2006, 170-171 Table 9.3) counts 21 for the whole of Greece, referring to them as representative of any class may be an overstatement.

The evidence of warrior burials in Achaea can be equated with that from settlements. The area around Patras, where most of the warrior burials are found has been noted as ‘densely populated in Mycenaean times’ while ‘the population lived in scattered settlements, each with a corresponding cemetery’ (Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, 199). However, few actual settlements are known, and it would seem likely enough that the city of Patras itself could be hiding some settlement evidence. Although there seems to have been no palace in Achaea, there were local centres. One of the most significant was the fortified site of Teikhos Dymaion, used from palatial to postpalatial times (LHIIIC Late) (Mountjoy 1999, 402). It suffered a destruction in LHIIIB2/LHIIIC Early and at the end of LHIIIC. Aigeira was also occupied in LHIIIA/B as well as seemingly throughout LHIIIC; it was fortified in LHIIIC Middle, possibly suffered a destruction then, and was subsequently reoccupied (Phase II) (Mountjoy 1999, 399). While the precise nature of these non-palatial sites is uncertain, the evidence suggests continued development and adaptation in Achaea, with modes of display chosen for their aptness to local circumstances and interests. Again, it seems inherently more likely that these represent local developments in display and ideology and may be connected with the region’s links with Italy and elsewhere at this time (Eder and Jung 2005).

Additional methods of burial display seem to have been utilised in some areas, in the form of tumuli and cremations. As noted above, a few warrior burials were cremations. In former palatial regions, evidence of cremation comes from Thebes, while in Argos, a tumulus held 36 pot cremations of LHIIIC Middle-Late, as well as 18 inhumations, and one at Khania near Mycenae contained 8 pot cremations only (Figure 6.9; Dickinson 2006a, 180; 1994, 231).

As has been noted, cremation was more common in non-palatial areas, particularly the western Peloponnese: Achaea, Elis and Arcadia and the central Aegean koine, although it remained a minority rite (Dickinson 2006a, 73). Cremation itself was apparently first used in the palatial period, perhaps inspired by contacts with Italy and Anatolia, via the Dodecanese, and would have been a particularly visible practice ideal for public displays of status (Snodgrass 2000, 187; Dickinson 2006a, 73, 181). It is also possible that cremation could have been inspired by the practice of making burnt animal offerings, which seems to have occurred in palatial times (Hamilakis and Konsolaki 2004). In the new LHIIIC cemetery at Perati, discussed below, cremations tended to be of adult males with richer tombs (Dickinson 2006a, 181) and in the tumulus at Argos, infants appear to have been buried in pits, while the cremated remains were of adults (20) and children or young adults (8) (Thomatos 2006, 152).

It is highly doubtful that warrior burials, cremation or tumuli represent any influx of new people. Warrior burials of LHIIIC developed out of older traditions and reflected aspects of life in the postpalatial period. They have been compared in kind to earlier Mycenaean weapons burials (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 152), and can therefore plausibly be linked with circumstances in the less politically stable early and late Mycenaean periods in palatial areas, where the practice was less visible during palatial times. If anything they may reflect competition for status in parts of Postpalatial Greece. Cremations, usually found in traditional Mycenaean tombs, are normally outnumbered by inhumations, often occurring in the same tomb as them, and there is no reason to regard them as anything other than a deliberate choice of ritual (Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 73; Snodgrass 2000, 189-190; Dickinson 2006a, 180-181). Tumuli seem to have been used sporadically during the palatial period and earlier, notably at Orchomenos, Samikon, Koukounara and Chalandrinou: Kissos in Messenia, Kephallenia: Oikopeda and Marathon (Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 62-63, 80-81). While the Khania tumulus represents a novelty, the form was not completely unknown and the purely Mycenaean contents should be noted (Dickinson 1994, 231; Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 91-92). Tumulus 3 at Marathon, with 3 cist graves, belongs to a tradition of tumuli at that site where it follows earlier examples (Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 91). In a later context, though relevant here, Georganas (2002, 295-296) has argued that the appearance of tumuli in Halos, south-eastern Thessaly, where there is a cemetery of 37, in fact represents the formation of new identities and a new social reality, rather than having anything to do with ethnicity or incoming people bringing novel cultural practices. Earlier tumuli should be seen in the same way. Novelty and experimentation fell within the boundaries of traditional practice and the coexistence of practices such as cremation and inhumation ‘hardly suggests that adopting the rite entailed any basic change in beliefs, since it was the living users of these tombs who would have organised the cremations, so that any ideological element involved, must have been acceptable to them’ (Dickinson 2006a, 180-181).

In summary, it seems likely enough that the practices discussed above have some link with the expression of power, status and identity, although they do not present a clear picture of well-established rulership. Deger-Jalkotzy (2006, 175-176) has argued that the warrior tombs are the tombs of basileis, and reflect a desire on the part of some families or lineages ‘to establish some kind of monocratic rule, possibly following… the model of Mycenaean palace kingship,’ but this seems unlikely, for there is a
lack of clear expression of heredity, strong rule and there is no pressing reason to link any postpalatial styles of rule in areas that had had no palaces, with the principles of palatial kingship.

While it would seem likely that the disintegration of Mycenaean states would place more power in the hands of local elites and dignitaries, possibly the basileis of the Linear B tablets, it nevertheless remains that warrior burials seem to be primarily located in areas that had never been palatial. At Tiryns and other sites, a strategy of adopting some aspects of wanax ideology was pursued, although with significant differences, that could indicate the presence of a noble or powerful class. These differences in LHIIIc reflect the different heritages of particular areas.

Returning to the argument about the use and significance of the term basileus, it can be reiterated that the later use of the term presupposes its function in the LBA as indicating a local power, both in palatial and non-palatial areas. Although sharing parts of an ideology, advertised on pictorial pottery, the expressions of this seem to be different in different areas. It is not unlikely that the families at Tiryns were headed by basileis but equally, in Achaea, people with the same title may already have existed, and sometimes became visible through warrior burials. There seems no need to seek to trace a kind of linear progression or evolution of kingship or rulership into later times, but rather to consider that the title itself remained useful, and was used by those who thought themselves, and were thought by others to be important. Its use, and the extent and style of rulership exercised by any individual, will have reflected the local contemporary situation and the abilities and charisma of that individual and may thus have survived from the LBA into much later times without indicating any other particular similarities in rulership.

Basileis at Sea and in the Islands
Basileis have been identified according to other criteria connected to naval activity in areas of Greece that have not revealed warrior burials (Crielaard 2006). Crielaard (2006, 272-274) has adopted a regional approach based on the Euboean Gulf to demonstrate this (see Figures 6.10 and Figure 5.15). This area, linked by the sea, possesses fertile coastal plains, which were good agricultural lands, and settlements tended to be on hills or mounds, often flanked by bays or beaches providing access to the sea (Crielaard 2006, 273). In the palatial period, Thebes had some influence in the area, which seems to have extended to southern Euboea. Theban Linear B tablets indicate wool being sent to Amarynthos and livestock from Karystos to Thebes (Crielaard 2006, 277). It is likely that Thebes had an interest in mainland coastal sites at least, due to its inland location. To the north, Orchomenos may have had a similar influence and perhaps had its port at Mitrou, then part of the mainland.

Destructions c.1200 appear to have affected the palaces of Thebes, Orchomenos and Dimini, as well as other sites, although there is some LHIIIc Early and Middle pottery from LHIIIc houses in Pelopidou Street (Flouda 2006) and the Kolonaki Tombs at Thebes, some pots possibly being imported from the Argolid, and there is LHIIIc Early from settlement deposits at Orchomenos (Mountjoy 1999, 647). There may also be some LHIIIc Late material from Orchomenos (Mountjoy 1999, 687). At Dimini there was some reuse of Megaron A in LHIIIc Early before the site was abandoned in that phase (Figure 6.11; Adrimi-Sismani 2006, 474-475).

There was also some abandonment of sites in the Euboean Gulf region, although this was not as severe as in other regions (Crielaard 2006, 277). The decrease in sites indicated by Crielaard’s maps (2006, 277 and Figure 14.1a and b; Figure 5.15) show a drop from around 90 sites to approximately 50, which can plausibly be explained by nucleation. Some sites that had experienced destruction by fire were reused and postpalatial occupation seems to have been prominent especially in coastal locations and he notes that no new sites became

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31 Equally this could be said of wanax kingship, the principles of which are assumed, rather than known.

32 Note that Chalkis and Lefkandi are slightly misplaced on this map (Sherrett pers. comm.).
occupied at this time (Crielaard 2006, 278). A new cemetery at Perati in the far south of this region was founded, however (Iakovides 1970; Dickinson 2006a, 178). Some sites seem to have become more important than before.

While it has sometimes been suggested that there was a postpalatial flight from the coast in response to some threat from the sea, perhaps most visible in Crete (Nowicki 2000; 2001), this is certainly not visible in the Euboean Gulf region, nor in Achaea or even the Argolid. Crielaard (2006, 278) notes rather that there was a shift towards coastal sites in various parts of Greece and that the coastal sites in the Euboean Gulf were unlike so-called refuge sites. He suggests that they may have relied on ships for defence, oared galleys, which figure in the pictorial pottery of the region (Figure 5.2b; Crielaard 2006, 280). Fighting is often present in these scenes and it seems likely that they represent contemporary activities ‘speedy seaborne attacks on coastal settlements and… naval engagements at sea’ (Crielaard 2006, 280). Other martial and elite activities are represented in locally produced pictorial pottery from the region during LHIIIC Middle from Amarynthos, Thorikos, Kynos, Kalapodi and Volos and Mycenaean pictorial pottery showing a sea-battle has recently been found in Asia Minor, at Bademgedigi Tepe (Crielaard 2006, 282-283 and Figure 14.4; Mountjoy 2005; Figure 5.2c). This suggests the existence of interrelated communities that engaged in a shared ideology, which may represent elite lifestyle or values. As noted above, there is evidence of this in other parts of postpalatial Greece.

Crielaard (2006, 281) argues that it is in sites such as Kynos, that ‘we may locate individuals of the rank of qasireu, who at some point during the post-palatial period took over the power formerly held by the Mycenaean wanax.’ The situation of Kynos in LHIIIIB is unclear, but the buildings of that period may have been destroyed by earthquake while the LHIIIC buildings overlay them (AR 1998, 73). The excavated complex seems to include storerooms with pithoi and clay bins as well as two pottery kilns and an oven, possibly for smelting metals and Kynos has revealed much pictorial pottery illustrated with warships (AR 1998, 73; Thomatos 2006, 141; Crielaard 2006, 281). Despite repeated destructions, the site continued in use throughout LHIIIC and in LHIIIC Late/Submycenaean there were baby burials in pits or cists in the floors (Dakoronia 1996, 42). While the claim that there was a qasireu located at Kynos during palatial times is speculative, it seems likely enough that this centre could have been the location of a postpalatial basileus. Depending on how we interpret the relationships between palaces and local centres, and how external trade was carried out, it could be thought plausible that this was a local centre utilised by the palace, though it remains probable that there would have been a local infrastructure present.

Lefkandi may also have been the seat of a palatial qasireu, although the same caveats mentioned above apply here too (Lemos 2006, 517). In postpalatial times, the site shows several planned building phases during LHIIIC, which were described in chapter 5, so some organisation was evidently achievable. As at Kynos, there were storage facilities and workshops and to Phase 2 belongs the pictorial pottery from which ‘we assume that the inhabitants had a sophisticated lifestyle’ and contacts with sites in Greece, the Aegean and elsewhere flourished (Lemos 2006, 518). Two sherds found in 2003 have
scenes with warriors on ships (AR 2005, 51). However, although Lefkandi was undoubtedly a site of importance during LHIIIC, the evidence for rulership is unclear, although a PG megaron reusing the lines of LHIIIC walls is suggestive, as at Mitrou, discussed below. Since it was not itself a palace site, the kind of continuities found at Tiryns would not be expected, but the pictorial pottery does suggest that there was a market with an interest in the expression of values, which have been characterised as heroic, and that might befit basileis or an elite ideology. In Phase 2b there were a number of intramural burials of both adults and children, as at Kynos and Tiryns (Thomatos 2006, 202). One of these skeletons, which may belong to LHIIIC Middle or Late, appeared to have had a limb severed, although it cannot be determined whether this injury was caused by a sword in violent action or in perhaps in an accident. To base an interpretation of this injury solely on the assumption that the period was particularly violent does seem questionable but is not inherently unlikely.

It may be the case that at postpalatial Lefkandi there was a more egalitarian arrangement, which would not rule out the opportunity for individuals or families to exercise more influence at certain times, such as may fit at Tiryns. While the evidence for any single ruler is absent, again it could be suggested that a number of local basileis may have been present. This could reflect the situation on Ithaca, described in the Odyssey, with prominent families that had an agricultural base, but who also engaged in activities that brought them into contact with overseas areas.

As mentioned above, Mitrou (Figure 6.12) may have been the port of Orchomenos, and following the arguments of Crielaard (2006) and Lemos (2006) would also have been a likely seat of a palatial gasiaon. This recently excavated site is, like Lefkandi, notable for the degree of continuity through the LBA/EIA transition (AR2005, 53). Most of the excavated remains belong to LHIIIC and PG, although all LBA phases are represented and pottery and walls of the palatial period have been noted (AR 2005, 52-53; Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 40-41; Kramer-Hajos and O’Neill 2008). Although there is no mention of pictorial pottery, Mitrou is notable for the presence of a large building, Building B, possibly a megaron, which appears to have been constructed in LHIIIC Early, with later modifications and to have gone out of use some time in LHIIIC (Figure 6.12; AR 2005, 53; Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 41). This building has been partially exposed over 9m and had rubble walls 0.7-0.8m thick. It appears also to have had a central row of columns, and thus appears comparable to the LHIIIC megaron at Midea, Building T, Room R115, Megaron W and Room 8/00 at Tiryns and Houses L and P at Korakou (Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 44). Because of its size and similarities with these other buildings linked to postpalatial ruling elites, it is likely that this is an elite building and ‘would be the first example of this new building type this far north’ (Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 44, AR 2005, 53). This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the PG Building A, a large apsidal building, was constructed within and seems to have reused Building B’s walls (Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 44 and 43 Figure 4; AR 2005, 53). Building A is comparable to other PG large apsidal buildings, including the Lefkandi Heroon (Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 44-45 and n.6). 'The re-use of parts of an important final Bronze Age structure by an imposing Early Iron Age building provides an unprecedented example of architectural and spatial continuity across the Bronze Age – Iron Age divide' (Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 45).
These developments are particularly significant considering that Mitrou did not have an LHIIIB palace, and is thought to have been subordinate to Orchomenos. The early date is also important, since specific dates for developments at Tiryns are less clear. It suggests that areas that may have fallen more under palatial influence than say in Achaea, might opt to make use of forms derived from palatial traditions. Equally of course, it may mirror contemporary changes elsewhere, for example at Midea. Mitrou may be a more plausible site to suggest the activities of an individual ruler, based at Building B. It must be said though, that this is not certain. The long-lived complex could represent a focal point in the community with a more religious or ceremonial function, even acting as a meeting place for a broader elite.

Further north, after the demise of Dimini and Pefkakia early in LHIIIC activity at other sites, notably Volos, continued. The site of Volos appears to have been significant in the palatial period. It has been thought to have been a palatial centre and was previously identified with Iolkos, although now Dimini is preferred, though Volos may have been an early, less successful competitor (Mountjoy 1999, 819; Adrimi-Sismani 2006, 476). The Kapakli tholos was built in LHIIIA1 and used for some 20 burials over several generations. The gold jewellery found in it suggest ‘neither poverty nor provincialism’ (Mountjoy 1999, 819). In 2004 another very impressive tholos tomb, apparently with Linear B symbols carved into a stone beam above the relieving triangle (Figure 6.14),33 was discovered at Kazanaki (AR 2005, 59-60).

It contained seven burials dated to LHIIIA1-LHIIIA2, although it seems that in LHIIIC the decayed bodies were burned, a practice that may have been carried out at other tholoi in this region and others (AR 2005, 61). It has been suggested that this secondary burning ‘aimed to unburden those performing it from the dead, who in life were the main representatives of Mycenaean domination’ although that is only one possible explanation (AR 2005, 61). Whatever the relative position of Volos before c.1200, it became the major regional site in the postpalatial period, and LHIIIC Middle pictorial pottery displays a ‘lively local’ style and there are links with southern Greece and the north-west Peloponnese (Mountjoy 1999, 826). Some krater fragments have military scenes including warriors with ‘hedgehog’ helmets and an archer, possibly in a chariot (Mountjoy 1999, 851). Pottery and settlement may continue through all phases of LHIIIC and Submycenaean (although there is no LHIIIC Early) (Mountjoy 1999, 826). At Pteleon, LHIIIC tholos tombs are associated with earlier tholoi and follow local traditions (Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 92).

In the very south of the region focussed on by Crielaard (2006), lies Perati (Figure 5.16). As noted already in chapter 5, this was chosen as site of a new cemetery in LHIIIC and seems to indicate the existence of a fairly wealthy and well-connected community, with a similar lifestyle to those at Lefkandi. Three warrior burials have been identified in T.12, T.38 and T.123 (without a sword but with a spearhead), belonging to LHIIIC Middle or Late, LHIIIC Late and LHIIIC Middle respectively (Figure 6.15; Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 172 Table 9.3).

Deger-Jalkotzy (2006, 156) interprets the LHIIIC Late T.38 as ‘the burial place of an important family or clan of whom one member (individual II or individual III) had attained warrior status.’ Apart from the warrior burial, she suggests that individual II was of important status because of the kylix placed near the skull, and that individual IV, who was cremated and whose ashes were deposited in a pot along with those of a goat and sheep and some gold wire, was also of some rank. T.12 is more difficult to interpret, and may have been ceremonially abandoned, with the sword and knife deposited at that time as a memorial, but she suggests that it too belonged to an important family. Various silver rings, a mirror and large pots may indicate this. As for T.123, built and abandoned in LHIIIC Middle, as well as a spear, this contained a large krater and drinking vessels, a razor, tweezer and a whetstone (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 156-157).
Without the settlement that accompanied Perati, it is more difficult to contextualise the evidence from the cemetery, just as at Lefkandi, a contemporary cemetery would aid in interpreting the settlement. It seems not unlikely that the warrior burials again represent a desire to distinguish individuals in a particular way, but the warrior burials seem too few to represent any strong rulers, and evidently other ways of marking distinction were acceptable. That T.38 had a warrior burial followed by a cremation may indicate the changing and experimental methods of display. They may nevertheless represent individuals who became pre-eminent for a time, and as Catling has suggested (1995), this could have something to do with their overseas links. Regarding warrior status, it does not seem clear that warrior burials can possibly represent all those who would have been involved in fighting, and being so few in number, call into question the martial nature of the period, at least in so far as it was reflected in burial practice. Generally, Perati, like Lefkandi, seems to reflect a lack of very significant or wide distinctions within the community, although it is probable enough that there were more prominent members of the community.

Turning to the Aegean, it is also likely that local rulers and elites were present. Koukounaries, on Paros (Figure 5.4), is a prime candidate, with its planned monumental building ‘designed to facilitate the customary functions of a Mycenaean palace’ (Schilardi 1984, 202). This has been interpreted as the seat of a fleeing mainland wanax but the development can perhaps more plausibly be seen as a local event, ‘a local dynast doing the Mycenaean thing’ (Dickinson in Barber 1999, 139). The site was rich in finds displaying its integration into postpalatial trade networks. Although the site was destroyed violently in LHIIIC Middle, as was Kanakia, it continued to be inhabited till the end of LHIIIC at least (Schilardi 1984, 204).

The settlement of Grotta, on Naxos, may be another likely place that elites connected with the sea and trade existed during LHIIIC (Vlachopoulos 1998). This site revealed three warrior burials, in two different but nearby cemeteries, Aplomata and Kamini, dating to LHIIIC Middle (Figure 6.16; Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 162).

A sword was associated with Tomb A at Aplomata, which may be of LHIIIC Middle date, and either one (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 162) or two swords (Thomatos 2006, 160) with the LHIIIC Middle Tomb A at Kamini. Another warrior burial on the north-eastern edge of Kamini has been identified by Vlachopoulos (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 162). He suggests that there was a very visible open air ceremony, with the body inhumed over a pyre of sacrificed animals. Tomb B at Aplomata has been suggested as containing the burial of a royal female, the counterpart to the male warrior burial of Tomb A (Kontoleon, cited in Thomatos 2006, 160). The presence of these warrior burials, associated seemingly as the focus of two different cemeteries, may indicate a competitive situation rather than presence of a single ruler. It may be that they represent two competing oikoi, headed by basileis, though this is not to suggest that there was any institutionalised or hereditary monarchy. The relative wealth of the two cemeteries at Grotta has also been noted (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 162) and it seems that the warrior burials indicate a particular kind of distinction within and amongst other types of burial.

The site of Kanakia on Salamis (Figure 5.8) also seems to have been an important site, destroyed or abandoned in LHIIIC Early and deserted after c.1150 (AR 2002, 14-15). Unit IA parallels buildings at Mycenae, Tiryns, the Menelaion and Iolkos, and comprised storerooms and workshops and fragments of bathtubs. Finds indicate local and more distant trading contacts. Building IB was in use during LHIIIB and LHIIIC and may demonstrate continuity through c.1200. The site appears to have had strong defences and perhaps to have been destroyed in a siege or battle, indicated by an arrow straightener and slingstones in the destruction layer. This major site, with industrial and military concerns seems a good candidate for the presence of a local authority, perhaps a local basileis at least until the middle of the twelfth century when the twin settlements at Ginani became more important, being occupied through later LHIIIC, Submycenaean, Protogeometric and Geometric (Lolos 2001, 121, 127).

Crielaard (1998, 190; 2006) has argued that an elite culture is visible in LHIIIC and that postpalatial basileis...
may be identified in the Euboan Gulf region as well as elsewhere. These can be distinguished by the ideals displayed by LHIIIC Middle pictorial pottery, in particular the naval and martial themes, and in some areas by architectural constructions. By these criteria, elites can be identified in areas that were formerly palatial, such as Tiryns, or hypothetically under the influence of palaces, such as Mitrou, whereas other areas are linked to this ideology by pictorial pottery and/or burials sometimes with a warrior ethos. These elites have been seen as emergent (Crielaard 1998, 190), but this is not necessarily the case (Crielaard 2006,282-283) since many of the elite activities appear to have been popular in palatial times (Rutter 1992, 68) and it is likely that members of the elite, perhaps local elites in particular, survived the collapse, especially in some areas. A loosening of central power in formerly palatial areas may have increased the autonomy of local figures, but it could also be the case that the increasing independence of local figures could have weakened the centre.

Elites in non-palatial areas, or areas more distant from palaces, could also have become more important, with the knock-on effect of weakening palatial authority. It was mentioned above that Thebes had some influence over Euboea in palatial times. Precisely what the relationship was, whether control, cooperation and so on, is problematic. Cavanagh and Mee (1998, 64, 82) have suggested that the small tholoi at Velousia, Katakalo: Ayia Paraskevi and Oxylithos: Evrimia in southern central Euboea may have belonged to 'petty chiefs' and if that is the case, then the level of direct 'control' by Thebes must be doubted, unless these chiefs were incorporated into palatial hierarchies in some way, possibly as basileis. It is necessary not only to consider the interests of palaces as possibly expanding and ambitious entities, but also to note that local areas and elites could choose to interact with them and perhaps to stop interacting with them, or to expand their own interests unilaterally. There are many ways for these interrelations to have occurred and they have a direct bearing on developments in postpalatial Greece, but it does seem inherently likely that local elites continued to exist after the collapse of the palaces and could plausibly have been involved in undermining the palaces.

Conclusions
It should be clear from this chapter the postpalatial period was one in which rulers and elites continued to function, although there was no longer any large scale kingship in areas that had been palatial. With the loss of the overarching political structures of the palaces, some local elites may have retained or increased their own localised influence. At Tiryns, leading families may have sought to fill the vacuum created at the centre by appropriating the citadel and the area of the former palace for themselves; it is quite plausible that faction may have created that vacuum in the first place. In this sense, other aspects of social structure, such as the existence of oikoi must have continued from palatial times, as the basis of wealth, for some at least. Other former palatial centres, Mycenae and Midea, may have experienced similar changes. In non-palatial areas, rulers and local elites continued to rule but some seem to have adopted particular styles of funerary display, which can be seen as reflecting developments based on existing circumstances in those regions, as well as the contemporary situation. In these areas too, it is likely that many aspects of social structure continued, since they experienced no collapse. At Mitrou and Lefkandi, the development and continuity of major PG buildings over LHIIIC ones is notable.

This period should be thought of as one in which there were still rulers of different levels, as there had been in palatial times, but also one in which position could be achieved through action and charisma, and was not necessarily institutionalised or hereditary. In many areas, rulership as such may have been very limited and dependent on the influence of more prominent families, perhaps similar to the portrayal of Ithaca in the Odyssey. Some aspects of rulership and social structure inevitably derived from local conditions in the palatial period, but the strife of the period and the loss of bigger political and social networks will undoubtedly have caused changes and a degree of fluidity. It is likely that material changes were a consequence of the new realities of the postpalatial world, and in turn, a lack of major power in the hands of rulers could mean continued instability and change.

There were still links throughout Greece and further afield in the postpalatial period, and the elites shared in displaying their particular interests, in war, hunting, ships and chariots, on pictorial pottery. Continued social organisation is evident through building programmes and town planning, but also through the ability to build and crew ships and to field military forces. The lack of visible activity through the paucity of evidence in some areas therefore should not be regarded as reflecting a depopulated landscape. Rulership at some centres like Kanakia and Koukournaries may have eventually failed during the twelfth century, but at Grotta, Perati and especially Mitrou and possibly Lefkandi it is likely that it continued to develop in new ways relevant to the local communities. In all areas, rulership may have become a more shared activity, in the sense that oligarchies could have replaced single monarchies, in a situation where no one was able to impose lasting dominance. Destructions continued throughout the postpalatial period and this suggests continuing instability and warfare, perhaps consequent on bids for power, the presence of more groups to fight for it, and the loss of any unity that may have been offered in some form by the existence of palatial structures. In this context, the continued use of the term basileus and the abandonment of the position of wanax shows the disintegration of these structures and a localisation of power, which may itself have become a continued source of strife.
7. CONCLUSIONS

Introduction
This study has attempted to outline the salient points of Mycenaean palatial and non-palatial society, and to examine the destructions and abandonments c.1200 that mark the collapse of palace based society, and to describe some features of the Postpalatial period. Recent literature on collapse theory was discussed and criticised in order to contextualise theories of Mycenaean collapse. These theories were then analysed thematically and recent trends identified. In the absence of historical texts from palatial Greece, other societies that experienced collapse were examined in order to identify some of the processes involved. These were used to suggest that similar processes were at work in the Mycenaean collapse. Evidence for settlement and population mobility in the postpalatial period was examined, as was the evidence for rulership and social structure.

This concluding chapter will attempt to draw together some final points, firstly evaluating the Mycenaean collapse and discussing the nature of the postpalatial period and especially LHIIIC Middle. It will also offer a brief discussion of the situation on Crete. It will then set the Mycenaean collapse in the context of general collapse theory and attempt to summarise what may have been the specific causes of the Mycenaean collapse. Some comments will then be made about what could help us to understand the Mycenaean collapse more fully. Finally some remarks about the notion of continuity will be offered before final comments are made.

Evaluating the collapse of Mycenaean palatial society
The Mycenaean collapse, as was observed in chapter 2, has figured in several contributions to general collapse theory (e.g. Tainter 1988, 202; Diamond 2005, 14), and some aspects of this general theory can be usefully applied to its evaluation. In particular, the manifestations of collapse outlined by Tainter (1988, 4) provide a useful way of summarising aspects of the preceding discussion of the evidence from Greece, and this has been done below. To some degree the criteria overlap and some repetition is unavoidable. However, by summarising the data in this way, it is also possible to note the important differences between palatial and non-palatial areas.

1. A lower degree of stratification and social differentiation
This is one of the most visible aspects of the collapse, since it involved the abandonment of overarching regional power structures based on palaces and wanaktes. Both the wanax and other roles in the palace hierarchy seem to have disappeared, although this suggestion relies on the absence of the texts that showed their existence, whereas it may be that local basileis remained. It could be thought that some other figures or groups, perhaps based on local aristocracies also continued for a time. Though rulers and elites continued to be present, they were locally based and burials generally indicate less differentiation than before in terms of wealth or investment, although in some areas new forms of differentiation were adopted. Some high status buildings were in use. Some of these partially maintained palatial traditions, as at Tiryns, and new buildings at Mitrou and Lefkandi may show new local leaders based in local centres. In non-palatial areas there seems to be no similar reduction and this may indicate continuity at the same level of social complexity. Some non-palatial areas may have experienced an increase in social complexity based on new roles in trade routes and a lack of competition from palaces.

2. Less economic and occupational specialisation, of individuals, groups and territories
The degree of specialisation during the palatial period is difficult to determine, although regional specialisation is doubtful. However, in the absence of palaces and the support structures they offered to particular groups and individuals, even when partial, there would be less likelihood of continued specialisation, for example in textile production, and dedicated groups may have ceased to exist. Potters and others may already have been free agents, although palaces will have stimulated production. In the postpalatial period there is essential continuity in the pottery tradition, although certainly with pictorial pottery there seems initially to have been a considerable reduction in production c.1200 and in LHIIIIC Early, but pottery production need never have been a specialist or full-time activity. The increase in production and movement of pictorial pottery in LHIIIIC Middle indicates the presence of skilled individuals and groups, as well as social networks, and the existence of a possibly market for goods decorated in a style that may reflect elite concerns.

Agriculture may never have been specialised in a general sense; it certainly was not centrally controlled or directed by palaces. Crops grown remained similar in the postpalatial period and at a subsistence level there may have been fewer changes. Shipbuilding also seems to have continued without a break, or perhaps even became more important, which indicates the existence of complex organisation and the ability to mobilise wealth and resources. This is also apparent in the use of ships, which had to be crewed, and it may be that there was some degree of military specialisation in terms of the presence of standardised infantry and soldiers, as may be indicated on pictorial pottery. Non-palatial areas may have continued much as before, although developments in some areas may have stimulated increased specialisation in some skills, such as metalworking in Achaea.

3. Less centralised control; that is less regulation and integration of diverse economic and political groups by elites
The degree to which palace societies were centralised states, each focussed on a single palace, has been questioned, and a more minimal interpretation seems favourable. Palaces’ interests were selective and the
nature of the ‘control’ they exercised is problematic. While they had influence on and knowledge of distant places, and goods and resources flowed in and out within their territory or area of interest, it is not clear that these were formally controlled, or directed, rather than resting on traditional ties and mutual advantage. However, palaces did integrate and regulate some production and consumption, as well as having staff that performed particular duties, and they acted as venues for the interaction of elites in a central place.

The demise of the palaces must have seen a reduction in these activities as well as changes in the social, political and economic networks focussed on them. However, the points made about pictorial pottery above are relevant here, and LHIIIIC Middle in particular may have developed an elite culture, which exercised some control or influenced the focussing of activities, albeit without the habit of recording such activities in Linear B. In this context, activities such as shipbuilding suggests a continued ability to integrate resources, labour and skills, but it is possible that these were more cooperative ventures, and they are likely to have continued into the Geometric period. As for political groups, in the absence of large-scale central elites, based in palaces, localisation would have ensued, although all areas of Greece remained in contact with each other. A consequence of this may have been increased regionalisation of material culture and increased conflict and competition between smaller groups.

4. Less behavioural control and regimentation

Those who argue that Mycenaean palace society was bureaucratic, rigid, oppressive and burdensome, argue that the postpalatial period marked the lifting of these negative aspects. However, it is questionable that the Mycenaean palace societies should be characterised in that way, or that they exercised any excessive direct control over most people’s day to day lives, excepting what may have been some dependent or semi-dependent specialised workers or slaves that were part of palace workforces. It has been noted that many of the general population, surely mostly small-scale farmers, even in palatial areas, will have come into contact with local elites far more than with the representatives of palace centres. It is true to say that palaces will have played a role in socialisation, and certainly exercised a degree of ideological control over a long period of time, moulding a particular kind of society in some parts of Greece. However, this may have affected some parts of society more than others and there is always some degree of choice and consent in the relationship between local elites and central powers, which is always reciprocal; thus ‘control’ again is a difficult term. Even so, it is likely that the absence of the centre may have given more freedom to local elites, and thus the upper stratum of society was smaller in scale and less differentiated from the majority of the population. In this way, as palaces were no longer present to act as a socialising force, the very nature of society and the experiences and social realities of those within it will have changed. These more localised elites may have been unable to prevent the apparently increased mobility of population, which could have been a consequence of internecine warfare and depopulation, but also could have resulted from positive motivations on the part of individuals and groups.

In some ways, there may have been more regimentation in the postpalatial period, at least in a limited sense, since specialised military groups may have been developed or at least become more prominent, as could be indicated in pictorial pottery. This would apply in palatial and non-palatial areas and would suggest novel social developments that could have had serious social implications. Behavioural control and regimentation are not merely top-down strategies, imposed on a passive population, but can equally reflect wider changes in society. Continuity in some rites and traditions, such as those related to mourning, even just if in physical form rather than meaning, suggests that some social processes continued at the level of the general population, ensuring some continuity in some behavioural patterns. As it is, it may have been certain parts of the elite related to the palaces who were most directly and immediately affected by collapse.

5. Less investment in the epiphenomena of complexity, such as monumental architecture, artistic and literary achievements etc

Monumental architecture was a characteristic feature of palatial and to some extent non-palatial Greece. At the palace centres this is largely absent in postpalatial times and the structures created were on a smaller scale. A lack of major architectural projects may reflect a change in style as much as a lack of central power to mobilise resources in some areas, but some projects were certainly undertaken throughout Greece, e.g. at Tiryns, Teikhos Dymaion, Mitrou and Grotta that reflect continued ability. Artistic achievements in pictorial pottery continue and even flourish and there is some possible evidence of a continued fresco tradition, albeit very limited. The limited literacy of the palatial era appears to have ceased in mainland Greece. The tradition of epic poetry may have originated in some form in the palatial period, and arguably the postpalatial period was important for the development of the epics eventually attributed to Homer. Many aspects of culture remain invisible, but it would be unwise to ignore the possibility of a rich and lively oral culture even when impressive material remains are lacking.

6. Less flow of information between individuals, between political and economic groups, and between a centre and its periphery

According to the Linear B tablets, palaces had been able to gather significant amounts of information relating to their interests in people and things located at some distance from the palace itself. Although this interest was selective, it was nevertheless real. Since Linear B is of course absent in the postpalatial period, it is more
difficult to ascertain flows of information. Continued contacts and exchange of goods within Greece and the Aegean, and further afield, do suggest that information will have continued to flow back and forth, and some areas, especially non-palatial ones, may have been more involved than before. Regional pottery styles and other objects suggest such contact. In former states, it might be suggested that the capacity to gather and store information was reduced, and that this in turn will have weakened any centre’s ability to influence the surrounding territory. It seems that formerly peripheral sites and regions became centres themselves, although on a smaller scale than palace centres had operated. Tiryns remained an important centre, though possibly on a much more local basis, but as at other sites, such as Perati, there were still international contacts.

7. Less sharing, trading and redistribution of resources

The overall volume of trade seems to diminish with the transition into the postpalatial period, and beyond. Nevertheless, there may have been wider access to traded goods than before, which in palatial areas may have been more centrally controlled. Trading of different kinds of less easily detectable goods, such as people, may have become more common, although seems to have been present in palatial times. As concerns redistribution, the end of the palaces, which had redistributed specific items rather than been general centres of redistribution, may have allowed wider access to goods, although their demise in all likelihood reduced the stimulus for some kinds of production, which would have reduced the range of material culture.

8. Less overall coordination and organisation of individuals and groups

Even a minimalist model of the palaces must accept their role in coordinating such things as large-scale building projects and their organisation of some people into working groups with specific tasks, and their coordination, if not control, of other individuals and their products/skills. They redistributed some commodities, such as bronze or copper, possibly wine, and sent offerings to shrines. The loss of this must have resulted in some reduction of coordination and organisation in particular areas, palatial centres themselves and attendant sites. However, some aspects of coordinated and organised behaviour continued, as is evident in the continued production and circulation of pottery. A likely increase in the importance of ships to elites, also suggests coordination of resources, skills and labour, as does the probable existence of military groups.

9. A smaller territory integrated within a single political unit

The extensive reach of the palaces does not seem to continue into postpalatial times, in which local areas and small centres probably became autonomous and the influence and reach of former major centres was reduced. In non-palatial areas, where political boundaries are unclear, there was likely continuity.

According to Tainter’s criteria (1988, 4), collapse can be defined as ‘a rapid, significant loss of socio-political complexity.’ This would seem to be an accurate description of what the Mycenaean palace societies experienced, since rapid can mean several decades. What came to an end was a specific political and organisational style that had been attempted in a few areas and had developed over the preceding two centuries, leading to the dominance of certain major sites over their surrounding areas and possibly in some cases further afield, even into the Aegean. Collapse entailed the breakdown of the particular relationships that bound palace societies together in their own regions and that maintained them as ideological and socialising constructs. It is nevertheless likely enough that some social relationships continued, although they may have been expressed differently.

There is no pressing reason to see the collapse of all palatial regions as occurring actually or nearly simultaneously, that is, for example, within the same year, and in fact this may be thought quite unlikely. Even with the physical destruction or abandonment of individual centres, organisational powers and infrastructures could have continued. Such a situation is evident with regard to the Hittite monarchy and their relationship with Hattusa, which they were forced to abandon on occasion while maintaining their rule, as well as among some Maya groups, who fled older and more established centres for safer locations. Such actions, however, may have undermined the authority of such ruling groups.

The collapse of any one palatial region, for any reason, whether rooted in environmental factors or caused accidentally or deliberately through human agency, could have created an environment where the other palace societies were more likely to collapse. Some may counter this by suggesting that other palaces would surely become stronger and more able to expand into a power vacuum, and in some ways this is valid. However, if we consider the palaces and the operation of palace society as forms of interregional elite competition, the loss of any competitor may have weakened the symbolic value of the form of expression and created, or encouraged the creation of new forms of competition. Such a scenario could have weakened the validity of overarching styles of power and encouraged the fragmentation of formerly more unified areas. It could be suggested that, as palaces were lost over time, they were eventually replaced as symbols by a more martial or heroic elite ideology, expressed especially in LHIIIC Middle in pictorial pottery and weapons burials and maintained by elites concerned with infantry and sea battles, who chose not to build or rebuild impressive and permanent palaces on the scale of earlier constructions. This process would have meant some restructuring of society, especially in formerly palatial areas. To some extent, this will have brought palatial and non-palatial areas closer together.
again, in terms of complexity, and in the postpalatial period they shared these aspects of material expression.

The collapse of the Mycenaean palace societies by no means signified the end of Mycenaean culture itself, since Mycenaean culture, as opposed to palatial culture, existed more widely and collapse was only directly experienced in parts of Greece. In material terms, Mycenaean culture continued throughout the postpalatial period. In some palatial areas socio-political complexity did not wholly disappear and society certainly was certainly not reduced to a blank: the postpalatial period was no dark age. Even in the so-called Dark Age, village societies could be expected to have retained social complexity, not always apparent in the archaeological record. This pattern confirms that the Mycenaean collapse most likely represents the fragmentation of overarching power structures into smaller units. This must be considered at the level of personal relationships, which formed the basis of social organisation. The collapse indicates the failure and rejection of palace centres and large-scale rulership, and this reflects changes in the relationships between those at the centre and the rest of society, especially local elites. It is possible to envision such a scenario by reference to the Maya polity of Copán and the failure of kingship there, as discussed in chapter 4, although that is not to suggest that any Mycenaean palace society experienced exactly the same scenario.

Nevertheless, a great degree of continuity in material culture and social practices would be expected, especially where they were not inextricably linked with the palace centres themselves. The loss of Linear B is thus no surprise, but neither is continuity in ceramic production or burial practices. The most profound long-term effects, leading to the transformation of Mycenaean culture, may have been caused by the demise of the major centres. These had had influence within larger regions, and had promoted the development and maintenance of complex networks within them. They had acted as stimuli to production and had probably promoted a degree of stability, at least for a time, as well as cultural norms displayed in material culture.

The nature of LHHIIC Middle

The material evidence from the postpalatial period has been taken to imply a revival or recovery of Mycenaean society, particularly evident in LHHIIC Middle, approximately the second half of, or the later twelfth and early eleventh centuries (Desborough 1964; Popham 1994, 295-302; Dickinson 2006a, 56-76; Thomatos 2006). It is usually suggested that this followed a period of instability at the end of the thirteenth and early twelfth centuries, brought about by the collapse itself, with some initial attempts at recovery, and was followed by failure or decline in the mid to late eleventh century (Popham 1994, 303-304; Dickinson 2006a, 76-77). In this way, a narrative of the postpalatial period is presented, which relates it qualitatively to the preceding palatial period. However, there are problems with this approach.

Firstly, it is often noted that much of the evidence for LHHIIC Middle comes from the pictorial pottery produced and found in many parts of the mainland and across the Aegean to the Anatolian coast (Rutter 1992, 62; Popham 1994, 295-297). This style of pottery had largely ceased to be produced c.1200, and is rare in LHHIIIC Early, but became more popular than ever in LHHIIC Middle (Crouwel 1991, 31; Popham 1994, 296). At Mycenae, for example, 36.7% of pictorial pottery is dated to LHHIIC Middle while only 25.4% is dated to LHHIIIB (Crouwel 1991, 4 Table 1). Only 0.6% was dated to LHHIIIC Early and production declined again in LHHIIIC Late, with again only 0.6% of pictorial pottery dated to that phase.

The variation in the popularity of pictorial pottery should not be taken to suggest that changing proportions of pottery reflect an inability to produce it, but rather that the demand for such pottery fluctuated according to circumstances. In LHHIIC Middle, the absence of palaces was no bar to the production, circulation and use of pictorial pottery in various locations, and to what extent this should be seen as a recovery, rather than a specific development related to the culture of LHHIIC is questionable. Various shapes, the most popular being the krater, were used for decoration in LHHIIC, as before, however some of the themes do change (Crouwel 1991, 7-12; Rutter 1992, 63). For example, bulls, boxing and perhaps wrestling no longer appear as themes (Rutter 1992, 63) and while chariot scenes remain important, peaceful scenes are less common with hunting and warrior scenes increasing in prominence. Although Rutter suggests (1992, 63) an ‘earlier indebtedness to Minoan forms of sport… may have given way to a more Helladic emphasis on horse and chariotry’ there is no need to see this change in terms of putative ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics as opposed to changing forms of ideological concern in a world without palaces. Other palatial themes and royal symbols such as figure-of-eight or tower shields, as well griffins, lions and possibly sphinxes are absent or, in the case of the creatures, depicted in what Rutter (2000c) describes as a mocking or cartoon-like way, suggesting rejection of palatial ideology.

To view the achievements of people in LHHIIIC always in relation to the palatial period, in other words as recovery, success or failure, ignores the differences between the societies that existed in the palatial period and points to a problem in perspective. To view LHHIIIC Middle as a period of recovery may be valid enough for some areas in simply material terms, but the nature of this recovery should not be viewed as if it reflects a will to recreate earlier palatial forms and culture. The process of collapse in palatial areas, taking place across the end of LHHIIIB and in LHHIIIC Early marked a considerable chronological and experiential gap: an individual born in c.1300 or c.1250 and living at Mycenae, Tiryns or Pylos for 50 years would have grown up with palatial culture, perhaps as a young child, and as an adult would have lived in a time without any palaces. This would have been a profound change in terms of the material culture, and a shift from the political and administrative structures associated with palaces. The transition from palatial to non-palatial society would have been a significant change for the society as a whole.

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34 Crouwel suggests (1991, 16) that armoured figures depicted on a LHHIIB-B1 krater may in fact be saluting each other rather than boxing, as has been suggested.
years, would have had a considerably different worldview than an individual born in c.1200 or c.1170, say. Despite the certain cultural continuities ensured by the existence of successive generations, each passing on their cultural tales and their own personal stories of life and society, the different socialisation experienced by these generations will have formed the basis for change across time. A similar situation would have been apparent for people in non-palatial areas, where a changing view of the wider world may have been engendered, but it is as likely that the degree of change and continuity experienced was both less than in formerly palatial areas and different in nature.

Nevertheless, it would seem that in LHIIIC Middle, conditions were appropriate to allow the flourishing of a Mycenaean culture across mainland Greece and the islands, in which the evidence suggests that there was again some degree of stability and prosperity in some areas, widespread contacts and interrelations, as well as elements of an elite culture and social differentiation. But this positive picture should not be overstated. Given the reduction in the number of occupied sites, many of which had been in use for a considerable time, this world was fundamentally different. This is the case whether the changes are a matter of visibility for archaeologists, since they reflect changing styles of expression, or real population decline. While some features, such as pottery, weapons and jewellery suggest a common culture, there were also regional variations in pottery, as well as in the specific manifestations of differentiation, either in architectural forms or in funerary practices. At this time, societies across Mycenaean Greece seems to have been less differentiated than in palatial times, with no palatial/non-palatial divide, and the hierarchical distance between individuals in formerly palatial societies was probably reduced. Generally, there may have been more scope for individual action and the achievement of status in a myriad of smaller scale societies. Such a situation may already have been present in non-palatial societies before the collapse.

**Crete**

As noted, Crete lies outside the scope of this study. However, it is appropriate to make some remarks about Crete in the twelfth century. After the end of palatial administration on Crete, in the late thirteenth century, early archaeologists had envisioned a Neolithic style ‘life of terror’ for the inhabitants, characterised as refugees covering in the mountains (Pendlebury quoted in Rehak and Younger 2001, 458 n.513). As on the mainland, such an extreme and simplistic characterisation is now rejected, although some maintain it in a modified form.

The settlement evidence reveals some similarities with mainland Greece and the islands, with a reduction in identifiable sites often taken to indicate a falling population, but there are also many new sites (Rehak and Younger 2001, 458; Dickinson 2006a, 90-93 and Figure 4.3). It is often noted that settlements appear to have been located away from the coasts, and that this was a precautionary measure against piracy or raiding; Nowicki thus argues (1998, 217) that ‘some left Crete, but most of those who survived fled to the places in the mountains that could be defended’ and he likens this to the Neolithic settlement pattern with a population nucleated at certain sites such as Karphi. He further argues that this tactic did not work and that later, in the twelfth century, more people fled by sea, or into the mountains. However, tombs may show occupation of the Knossos area in LMIIIC and there is some LMIIIC pottery from Kommos, while Phaistos, Mallia, Chania, and Kastri, also near the sea, show some signs of activity (Rehak and Younger 2001, 459-461; Dickinson 2006a, 64-66).

Nowicki’s characterisation of the period is somewhat debatable (Dickinson 2006a, 65), and some sites do appear to show a degree of prosperity (Rehak and Younger 2001, 459). At Chania, settlement was extended and a Cypriot import and Italian style HMB have been found, and in LMIIIC, following a destruction with fire, there was reuse and new construction. No LMIIIC destruction is apparent, although the site was eventually abandoned, to be reoccupied much later. Figurines of Mycenaean type were also present in IIIC, but snake tubes and other Minoan features suggest local continuities. At Halasmenos, a settlement was founded near the sea in LMIIIC Middle and appears to have been founded by locals, who had some familiarity with Mycenaean material culture, which, as at Chania, shows a mix of Minoan and Mycenaean features (Tsipopoulou 2001).

The pattern of change and site abandonment and foundation should be regarded as much more gradual, and may have been relatively peaceful (Rehak and Younger 2001, 463). What changes there were may have been more connected to lifestyle, agricultural practices (as suggested for Kavousi Kastro and Kavousi Vronda) or the seasonal occupation of sites, as still occurs in Greece today, with some of the most inaccessible sites perhaps being refuge sites (Rehak and Younger 2001, 460; Dickinson 2006a, 65-66). Even so, it may be unwise to make general statements about the motivations for such changes on an island wide basis. As on the mainland, cremations become slowly more common, as does the use of iron, and some continuity is thought likely in social customs. The ‘Eteo-Cretan’ language is also a likely survival, showing the complex interrelations of material culture, language and ethnicity (Rehak and Younger 2001, 464).

Similar problems confront any who seek to interpret the Cretan evidence, including the spectre of the Sea Peoples and the desire to frame the evidence into a narrative that is interlinked with evidence from other areas. However, this subject is too large to be attempted within the scope of this work.
The Mycenaean collapse and general collapse theory
Chapter 2 reviewed trends in general collapse theory and it was suggested that a tendency towards environmental explanations and away from monocausal theories is now prevalent, with a few exceptions. Several authors have focussed on anthropogenic damage to the environment, and natural environmental factors such as megadroughts, as major causes of collapse, although often other arguments had to be brought in to make them more convincing. However, in some instances this was argued from a monocausal perspective. In general, arguments of this type have been widespread in explanations of the Mycenaean collapse since the 1960s, and include scenarios of drought and earthquake. Drought and earthquake hypotheses usually rely on arguments that palatial society was unable to cope and so they are in fact theories of systems collapse. Drought hypotheses especially rely on particular interpretations of palatial society as rigid, inflexible and often oppressive and unable to cope with stress, which are in fact highly questionable given the new appreciation of what Linear B cannot illuminate. They also fail to appreciate the active strategies of the experienced subsistence farmers who must have made up the bulk of the population. In fact, megadrought hypotheses do not really need to suggest inherent weaknesses in society, since a megadrought would in itself be catastrophic. However, while periodic droughts or climatic fluctuations are likely enough, there is no positive evidence of serious climatic problems that are not beyond serious question, and it is usual that scientific evidence is drawn from areas often far outside the areas affected.

It was also observed that there are difficulties in determining causes and effects. Although this work has consistently argued against mass migrations, it can be noted that these have often been cited as a cause and consequence of collapse. The Sea Peoples are a prime example of this. They have been blamed either directly or indirectly for causing the collapse of the Mycenaean palace societies but also some see the origins of some of the Sea Peoples in the dislodging of elite Mycenaeans, and thus as a result of the collapse. In invasion scenarios, it has also been suggested that invasions can be successful because a collapse has already occurred, and thus that invasions can masquerade as causes of collapse. Thus economic or political reasons are often argued as underlying causes, which other groups can take advantage of consciously or benefit from accidentally. Natural catastrophes or disasters such as earthquakes cannot be effects of collapse, although they are a popular cause or factor. It should be clear that these would not have had the same effect at different times and thus while in some circumstances a polity could survive and recover from an earthquake intact, at other times this may not have been possible. This could be evident at Mycenae. As for economic and political factors, these too can be cited either as cause or effect. Factional in-fighting or civil war could cause political collapse and consequent changes may be evident, but equally, if a collapse occurred for other reasons, political and economic change might follow as a result. This is difficult to ascertain without texts and even then may not be clear, since they must be interpreted. Economic changes too could present new circumstances to a society, and be a cause of collapse due to the breakdown of traditional practices, especially where a prestige economy operated, but also it could result from central collapse, which would cause changes in economic circumstances. It seems unlikely that there was any understanding of economics in the modern sense, and this could have caused problems in itself in determining appropriate responses in maintaining larger social and political structures.

It remains extremely difficult to evaluate these different possibilities or to know how to relate them to one another and how any emphasis should be placed in determining ultimate causes. However, it seems unlikely that any general theory of the cause of collapse will be found. Considering this, it seems ultimately best to conclude that collapse occurs for many reasons, determined by specific factors affecting individual societies. A better understanding of collapse is achievable, but is best considered in reference to the relationships between individuals and groups, especially in terms of central and local elites, and the problems in maintaining these to the satisfaction of all. By examining processes common to societies and groups, and the development, maintenance and fragmentation of these relationships, common themes can be identified, and in these human experiences and motivations, collapse is understood primarily as a social process. In a sense, this reduces the need to identify particular causes, about which it is often difficult or impossible to be conclusive. Nevertheless, something must be said of the possible causes of the Mycenaean collapse.

The specific causes of the Mycenaean collapse
The preceding discussions have presented some conclusions on the nature of the Mycenaean collapse, and discussed it in light of general collapse theories and the notion of causes. As has been outlined, there are many competing theories to explain the collapse of the Mycenaean palace societies and as stated in the introduction, this study does not seek to add a new one. However, some plausible causes can be outlined, although it is unlikely that any can be proved.

*Overstretch*
In seeking to dominate or extend their influence politically or/and militarily, one or more palaces may have made themselves more vulnerable to collapse. If defensive capability at the centre was diverted, enemies could have taken advantage of this and destroyed the centre, causing collapse and political fragmentation, and a possible increase in instability and warfare. This could be especially likely for the Argolid, if it sought to dominate some of the Aegean islands. Equally, in an extended overarching political system, vassals and local power groups could have split off from the centre, either seeking
new alliances, independent power or to take over the centre for themselves. This too could have resulted in fragmentation and an increase in warfare and instability. These factors could have caused collapse over time and led to changing settlement patterns and a decrease in population, as occurred in some Maya polities. Areas that were non-palatial may not have been directly affected and non-palatial areas that may have come under palatial influence could also have benefited. However, an increase in instability with more small competing groups could have led to prolonged problems and significant changes over time.

Economic changes
Changing trade routes and access to prestige goods could have undermined palatial authority and the foundations of their existence, as could a lack of markets for actual Mycenaean goods overseas, with these able to produce their own Mycenaean style goods locally. Non-palatial areas and local elites in palatial areas could have benefited from this increased access to goods, perhaps causing a waning of central authorities, whether actual or ideological. Equally, elites in non-palatial areas could perhaps have influenced a change in trade routes. Palace centres would have suffered from redundancy if the goods they produced were no longer required. Without any need for palace centres as sources of authority that may have derived from control over prestige goods, local groups could perhaps have claimed more authority and independence, causing conflict. Palace centres could have attempted to continue to dominate in other ways, perhaps leading to an increase in militarism and warfare that could have resulted in collapse and as their system could no longer function, they would not have been rebuilt.

Internal problems
These could stem from the problems outlined above, but could also have occurred independently for very individual and specific reasons not reducible to processes, such as personal ambition. Given the likelihood that the Mycenaean palace states were dynamic social systems based on personal networks between elites, conflict is not unlikely, with groups and individuals seeking their own advantage. We cannot dismiss the notion of local elites resentful of central authorities, nor their own ambitions to dominate in the wider sphere of internal palatial state politics. The creation of overarching institutions that expanded to include local elites could easily have resulted in this.

Rivalries and competition between local areas and elites inside these larger political units is also not unlikely. These potential cleavage points could be exacerbated by other factors. Likewise, the hypothetical dynasties that ruled palace states may have faced problems common to other royal families, such as problematical successions, rivalry and faction. If there is any validity to the notion of overstretch outlined above, the presence of rival members of the ruling family governing other areas, with their own authority and power base, could have caused serious problems in maintaining the stability of polities. Such a scenario of breakdown could be plausible for the Argolid and its influence, or attempts at influence, in the eastern Aegean. With breakdown comes fragmentation and instability, as already outlined.

Plague and epidemics
If serious enough, these are obvious potential causes of social and political change and collapse. They could affect the ability of a society to operate successfully due to high mortality and this could have seriously affected the relatively small-scale palace societies, whereas larger and perhaps more institutionalised societies that have also suffered from these could survive intact. Classical Athens, perhaps a fair comparison with a LBA palace state in this regard, did not collapse when it experienced a plague, and equally other serious plagues seem not to have led to the collapse of any major political units. A prolonged effect on population levels would have been normal and areas that had particularly high or dense populations could have suffered more than other areas. If elites were affected, then governance would have suffered and instability increased, but the general effects on agriculture and social norms would have pervaded society. There would have been more scope for social change within such a society, and it is reasonable to suggest that it could have led to collapse, even if there is a lack of evidence for this in other societies.

Discussion
From the research undertaken here, it is suspected that the above factors of overstetch, economic changes and internal problems are in some combination, and with the possibility of other factors playing a part, the most likely explanations of the Mycenaean palatial collapse. Rather than being based on questionable interpretations of Mycenaean society, later Greek myths, modern myths about the Sea Peoples, or politically charged contemporary debates about the environment, these have the advantage of being grounded in historical realities and also of admitting the role of human agency in collapse. It also becomes clear that collapse can happen quite unpredictably, as an accident of particular circumstances. It need not be a matter of groups seeking to destroy a society and no decline in that society need be real or apparent, even if some kind of defined decline can be identified. Plagues and epidemics remain a possible factor, but there is a lack of positive evidence for them, and depopulation itself, perhaps the most attractive reason for suggesting plague, can have a variety of social causes.

These conclusions reflect and reinforce the current consensus of scholars, outlined in chapter 3. This consensus rightly rejects the wholesale or mass migration of population groups, whether drawn from myths or archaeological evidence. On the other hand, that there were smaller groups of whatever origin present, that could have raided sites in Greece or the Aegean islands, or disrupted trade elsewhere, where they could not be
the collapse of palatial society in LBA Greece and the postpalatial period

dealt with, must be admitted as real possibility. Whether this could have caused collapse is perhaps doubtful, although it could have been a contributing factor. While admitting the likelihood that environmental factors played a part, as they do in all societies, as an explanation of collapse these alone are not enough, but must be combined with other factors.

The consensus appears to favour economic explanations and considers competition between palaces, to which perhaps non-palatial regions should be added, and links with the Near East to be significant. Competition or disruption of existing systems could easily have undermined either a prestige economy, a vital foundation of the palatial system, or even problems in subsistence production could have been a stimulus, and these could have had several causes. Equally, palaces could have become redundant as other areas gained in importance, or because of import substitution. Trade routes could have changed as a result of this, or could have been a cause of changes. Since the interactions and motivations of many disparate groups would have been involved in these relationships, it is impossible to determine the precise nature of events and any single hypothesis may not cover all the possibilities. Any such changes could easily have been a stimulus for increased warfare, either for physical resources, political or economic advantage or dominance, or as an alternative form of competition between or even within societies. The consensus view suggests the importance of warfare in the collapse. This was directed against palace centres plausibly by groups within palatial territories, perhaps local elites and their followings, or by other palatial or important centres. Since there is no way to reconstruct the political geography of Mycenaean Greece in palatial times, we can only speculate that there were networks of alliances and enmities, which could have extended into non-palatial areas, or even caused divided loyalties of local elites within palatial territories, and suggest that these too could have played a role in the collapse and fragmentation of palace states.

To some degree it is perhaps inevitable that any research reflects contemporary trends in interpretation, and this study is no exception. However, it is suggested that this study, by not seeking to support one particular theory of collapse at the expense of all others, and with the advantage of the changing understanding of the relation of myth to archaeology and history, as well as by identifying common processes in historic societies that collapsed, has been able to present an objective analysis of the collapse, which also admits the role of agency, motivation and chance. This may be inexact, and sometimes rather generalised or vague, but it is unlikely that any more precise picture can be developed, given the available evidence.

What would help us to understand the Mycenaean collapse?
Understanding of the collapse of the Mycenaean palace societies is undoubtedly hindered by problems with the evidence. The limited and highly selective literacy of the palaces is unhelpful. The Hittites, Romans and Maya left a wide range of texts that can be used to reconstruct their society and history yet the causes of their collapse remain hotly debated. The main benefit of these texts is that they allow us some insight into political arrangements, historical events and social processes, and from these hypotheses can be developed, but they do not provide a narrative of collapse and must be interpreted, as their writers selected and interpreted the events they recorded. This lack of texts in Greece has led to attempts to force particular interpretations of Linear B records into a narrative where they reflect economic or military problems and thus foreshadow the collapse. Given that we have such a limited amount of data, it is difficult to recognise what is normal and what is unusual in the texts, and to interpret them in light of the collapse is questionable.

Reliance on texts has also led to the widespread use of limited Egyptian evidence for the activities of the Sea Peoples, and other Near Eastern textual evidence concerning warfare and raiding in the Eastern Mediterranean. This has been used to fill the gaps in the Aegean evidence and to attempt to provide some kind of historical narrative. However, the few Sea Peoples texts in particular offer many problems of interpretation and discussions of them have become so laden with assumptions about who they were and what they were doing that a far greater significance may have been placed on them than is deserved. This is especially true for Greece itself, for while some of the Sea Peoples may have originated in the Aegean, this in itself does not explain the collapse of the palaces. In order to understand the collapse more clearly, we must remain very aware of this imbalance in the textual evidence and avoid interpretations of the Linear B texts based on hindsight. Likewise, where evidence from overseas is difficult to interpret, and of questionable relevance to Greece itself, this must be admitted; it should not be used merely to create a convenient, if attractive narrative. This approach may mean dismissing some evidence for the collapse and limiting the data even more, but to misuse evidence or to admit evidence that has no clear direct link may be a more serious problem.

While the texts hint at palatial interconnections and show the interest of palaces in particular areas, and the archaeology adds to this especially through scientific analysis of pottery, the nature of these relations, and those between palatial and seemingly non-palatial areas remain largely unknown. That said, a number of relations, including palatial control of non-palatial areas have been proposed, but remain problematic for reasons that have been discussed. Without texts, it is only possible to speculate about them and to suggest analogies, as this study has done, and this may be an effective way to approach an interpretation of the palatial period itself. Undoubtedly, this is a serious gap in our understanding of LBA Greece and one that affects any interpretation of
collapse. Although it is quite plausible to suggest that there were interconnections between the states and the non-state regions in terms of trade, marriage and alliance and military confrontations this remains speculative. We are unable to ascertain any accurate political geography that might hint at alliances or enmities, although by analogy with the Maya, we could expect that major sites might seek to dominate others and that this could cause problems that had more widespread effects. Both the Hittites and Maya politics had problems maintaining stability in terms of controlling vassals both politically and militarily. Similarly, there is a problem in understanding the internal dynamics of the palace states. Again, analogy with the Maya suggests that internal relations between elites could be a source of instability and cleavage in states, while the Hittite evidence shows the vulnerability of the ruling group to faction and infighting. These are likely but unverifiable sources of instability in the Mycenaean palace states. However, a lack of specific positive evidence renders this likely source of instability and potential cause of collapse one that is difficult to pursue.

From an archaeological perspective, there are other problems. It will have been noted that many difficulties in understanding the collapse and postpalatial period seem to be related to population levels and generally a decrease in population throughout the postpalatial period is noted. Overpopulation has been feature of explanations for the Mycenaean collapse and that of the Maya, usually linked with consequent climatic and agricultural problems. However, understanding population from burials and surveys is no more than informed estimation, since with burials we cannot be clear whether they are representative of the total population, and survey may not reveal all habitation. Given the application of different formulae to this data, a variety of figures can be arrived at, although they can never be verified.

It must be admitted that we cannot estimate the population of palatial Greece with any degree of accuracy and while the significant changes, particularly in regions such as Messenia, do seem to indicate population decline in the postpalatial period, given the problems of interpreting the data, we cannot be sure of the extent of this. It may be that populations became less archaeologically visible for a time, which is attested in ‘little dark ages’ in arcaic Crete. In practical terms, explanations that rely on overpopulation are questionable, and in fact it should not be forgotten that populations can survive and even grow despite bad diets and agricultural problems. Underpopulation caused by warfare, epidemics or famine could have played just as significant a role, as has been suggested for the Western Roman Empire and the Hittites. Although depopulation may be expected as a consequence of political instability and collapse, it must be admitted that the levels of population and demographic change are impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy, and thus it is difficult to draw precise comparisons between the palatial and postpalatial periods.

Another major problem, basic to understanding the collapse, is the chronology of destructions at particular sites. There has been a tendency to imagine a basic synchronicity to these, leading to a vision of collapse as a universal and catastrophic event. Since events require actors, this assumption has promoted explanations that require invaders of some sort, although natural catastrophes can also serve this function. Accepting that the collapse most likely occurred over a longer period of some decades may favour more process-based explanations such as changing economics and trade patterns as the fundamental reasons for the failure of a system. However, whether collapse should be seen as either a process or an event is the wrong way to set the question, since a process is punctuated by events. Changing circumstances, i.e. processes, interact with events, such as destructions, to cause different responses and abilities to act at different times. The perspectives of the people involved also change over time, reflecting the realities of the situation at any given moment, and these interact with their goals and motivations, as well as how society is reflected in material culture. This is what causes change. If the chronology could be understood better than at present, our understanding of the collapse could be improved, but in the absence of internal accurate dating, something which aids interpretations of the Maya collapse, and the reliance on interpretation of ceramics, this can be taken only so far.

The meaning of continuity
Another aspect of this work has dealt with issues of continuity and change from the palatial period. An attempt has been made to examine these in relation to whether the area was formerly palatial or non-palatial, since this will have played a part in shaping postpalatial culture in each area. However, while the issue of continuity is of importance to archaeologists and historians, it needs some clarification. For example, continuity in the form of palaces, as they developed through time, does not indicate that social forms remained static, nor does it give any indication of the events or experiences of individuals: the lived reality of the past. In a similar way, the evident material changes between palatial and postpalatial Greece promote a notion of change that may ignore social continuities that are not visible. The material continuity of Mycenaean traditions is visible into the postpalatial period, and the continuation of shipbuilding, weapon styles, mourning ritual and aspects of elite life has also been identified, and this is significant. However, it must also be considered that individuals were uniquely located in time and space, and were affected uniquely by the environment and communities that they were socialised by. Although it is only possible for archaeology to provide a broad and quite impersonal impression, this level of consideration must not be forgotten. What seems certain is that a quite specific way of life in palace societies ended, and in the
new realities of postpalatial Greece a quite different ‘lived reality’ was experienced. In areas that had not been palatial, this may have been less so.

In considering the continuity of rulership and elites, as well as the oikoi, it has been suggested that this is likely enough, particularly in some areas, but on a local and quite varied scale. Wanas style rule certainly ended, but the fragmentation of palatial systems need not have meant the fragmentation of local systems. In terms of the continuity of basileis from LBA Greece, it has been argued that these could already have been local notable figures, and that the term basileus indicated this in palatial times throughout Greece, although in palatial areas they were subsumed into an overarching system and subordinate to wanaktes. While the term may have survived, showing it must have been continuously applicable to people, it does not seem to denote kingship as such, rather than a particular kind of elite personage. It seems unlikely to have denoted any institutional kingship until (possibly well) after the postpalatial period. Postpalatial elites may have been unable to exercise as much power as the wanaktes and it seems that a more level situation, largely without strong single rulers was prevalent. In this scenario, some comparison may be appropriate with the situation of basileis described in the Homeric poems. Rulership itself might have been quite a vague notion, perhaps better considered as the ability to wield influence rather than govern. In this context, postpalatial society could have been quite unstable politically as well as having a more military nature, in which heroic ideals were espoused.

Final comments

The postpalatial period was significantly different from the palatial period, but these differences are more apparent in certain parts of Greece than others. As a long-lasting phase with particular characteristics, it must be considered important in itself and no mere footnote to the palatial period, nor prelude to a supposed dark age. It is encouraging that recent general textbooks on Greece (e.g. Hall 2007; Whitley 2001; Osborne 1996) begin their coverage at 1200, and that monographs (Dickinson 2006a; Thomatos 2006) and edited volumes (Shelmerdine 2008; Deger-Jalkotzy and Lemos 2006) reflect the importance of the period, and treat it with more nuance and sophistication than earlier works.

The end of the Mycenaean period, the end of the postpalatial period, came about through gradual changes in material expression at different paces in different regions, although local areas could retain earlier traditions and incorporate them into a new culture (Cavanagh and Mee 1998, 136). The worlds of archaic and classical Greece were fundamentally different to the Mycenaean palace societies and owed little to any direct continuities of tradition from the Mycenaean palaces, which is not surprising given the length of time separating them, and given the fact that only part of Mycenaean Greece had ever been organised in that way (Dickinson 2006b). This is well summarised by Cavanagh and Mee (1998, 136), who state that:

The process of change, which has sometimes been portrayed as sudden and abrupt, should, at least from the perspective of Greece as a whole, be understood to have taken generations.


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