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ABSTRACT

The historiography of the Greek Early Iron Age (1200–700 b.c.), and the history and appropriateness of the use of the period designations “Dark Age” and “Early Iron Age” to describe it, have been the topic of significant scholarly discussion over the course of the last several decades. This article contributes to the discussion in the form of a quantitative analysis of the appearance of these two terms in a sample of the relevant scholarship from the 20th century. In addition, it compares trends in terminology with another sample set of data that was designed to model the history of discovery of sites spanning the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, which are taken as a reasonable proxy for the diachronic evolution of our knowledge of the archaeological record.

The debate about the historiography of the Early Iron Age (EIA) of Greece is relatively mature. The discussion was largely begun by Snodgrass, who referred to the period as a so-called Dark Age (DA), during the 1970s; continued in the form of several long exegeses by Ian Morris in the 1990s; and was transformed by numerous voices, emergent over the last two decades, calling into question the old notion that the Greek Early Iron Age represented a period of societal collapse and discontinuity followed by regeneration, and claiming to vividly illuminate an era previously thought of as dark.

Most recently, Kotsonas has woven a compelling new narrative of the history of scholarship on the early 1st millennium in Greece that accounts for the