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The collapse and regeneration of complex society in Greece, 1500-500 BC

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Ian Morris

Stanford University

Abstract: Greece between 1500 and 500 BC is one of the best known examples of the phenomenon of the regeneration of complex society after a collapse. I review 10 core dimensions of this process (urbanism, tax and rent, monuments, elite power, information-recording systems, trade, crafts, military power, scale, and standards of living), and suggest that punctuated equilibrium models accommodate the data better than gradualist interpretations.

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# The collapse and regeneration of complex society in Greece, 1500-500 BC

Ian Morris, Stanford University

## I Introduction

Greece between 1500 and 500 BC is one of the best known cases of the collapse and regeneration of complex society. In the 1870s, Heinrich Schliemann showed that a Mycenaean (Late Bronze Age; see Table 1) culture had preceded Greece's Classical civilization, and in 1890 Flinders Petrie published Mycenaean pottery from Egypt correlating the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces with the Egyptian Nineteenth Dynasty, around 1200 BC. Their work created a wholly new framework for early Greek history. After three generations of fieldwork and analysis, Anthony Snodgrass systematized a new consensus in his magisterial *Dark Age of Greece* (1971): a period of sophisticated palaces (c. 2000-1200 BC) gave way to a depressed Dark Age (c. 1200-700), only to be replaced by new and brilliant Archaic (c. 700-480) and Classical (c. 480-323) civilizations.

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Table 1 Standard periodization of Greek history

Name	Dates BC
Late Bronze Age/ Mycenaean period	c. 1600-1200
Early Iron Age/ Dark Age	c. 1200-750
Archaic period	c. 750-480
Classical period	480-323

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As Schwartz and Bronson point out in their chapters (this volume), one of the main problems facing a comparative study of collapse and regeneration is the sheer variety of phenomena that could be included under this heading. To clarify matters, I will begin by simply stating six important characteristics of the period 1500-500 BC in Greece:

- 1) Throughout this period "Greece" was a cultural system, not a political unit. Political unity only came with the Roman conquest in the second century BC.
- 2) Greece was an example of what Bronson calls "genuine" regeneration: it was not a case of a political and economic center shifting, but of the transformation of the entire system
- 3) The end of the Dark Age was, on the whole, an example of endogenous regeneration
- 4) The "second-generation" (post-700) complex society did not much resemble the "first generation" (pre-1200) one. Networks of city-states characterized both periods, but their social, economic, and political structures differed strongly
- 5) The second-generation society had only distorted memories of the first, but these notions of a lost heroic age were central to second-generation culture
- 6) The second-generation system was larger and more complex than the first, extending geographically around the shores of the west Mediterranean and Black Sea

In section II, I present some basic information about the Greek case, and in section III, I discuss competing interpretations of the Greek data, the broader East Mediterranean context, and possible explanations of the collapse and regeneration of complex society in this region.

## II Ten dimensions of collapse and regeneration in Greece

Progress in analyzing the collapse and regeneration of complex society requires explicit criteria for measuring “collapse” and “regeneration,” which in turn imply shared definitions of “complex society.” Trait-list approaches are open to well known objections (e.g., Trigger 2003: 43-46), but it seems to me that they provide a good framework for organizing data that can be used to develop broader theories. In this section I group the evidence from Greece into ten categories, based on Gordon Childe’s famous (1950) discussion of the rise of urban society, but modified to fit the particulars of the Greek case.

### a) Urban centers

Late Bronze Age cities were relatively small: just eight hectares at Tiryns (fig. 1), twenty to thirty at Pylos, Thebes, and Troy, and not much more at Mycenae itself. The largest site, Knossos on Crete, covered 75 hectares. The mainland sites had perhaps 5,000-10,000 residents, and Knossos about 15,000. These cities were of roughly the same size as contemporary Anatolian and Levantine centers (Whitelaw 2001).

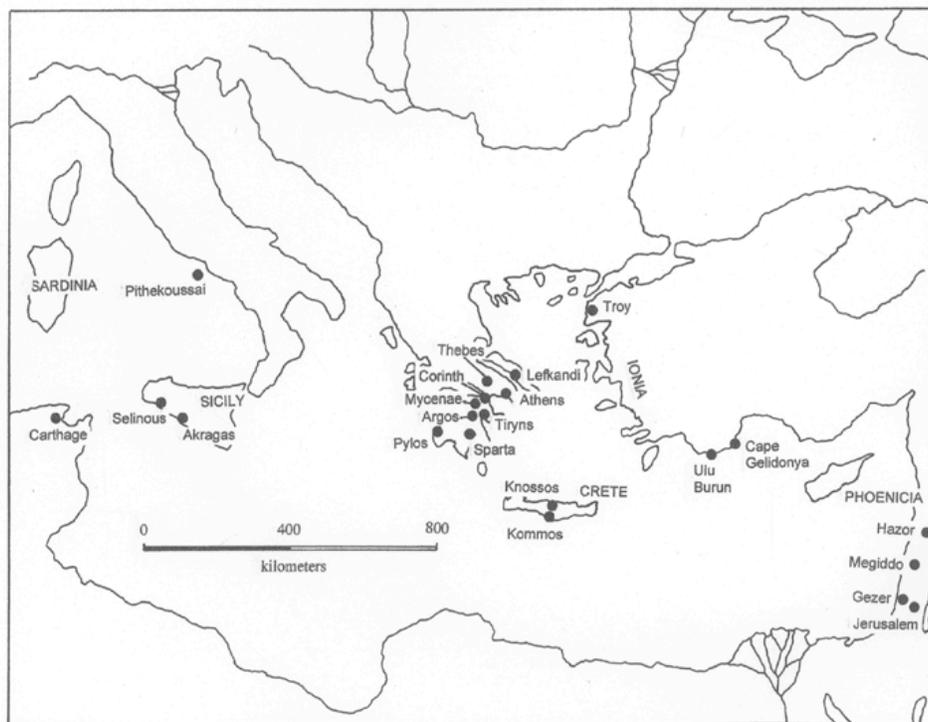


Fig. 1. Sites mentioned in this chapter

After 1200, the largest settlements contracted sharply. Most people lived in hamlets of a few dozen souls (Whitley 1991), and parts of Greece were virtually abandoned. Finds at the biggest site, Athens, spread across 200 hectares, but this seems to have been a group of villages, its population probably never surpassing 2,500-5,000. Other large communities, like Argos and Knossos, probably had 1,000-2,000 residents (Morris 1991: 29-34).

City size increased in Archaic times. By 700 BC, Athens, Argos, and Knossos must have had 5,000-10,000 people, and dozens of towns were in the 1,000-5,000 range. Pithekoussai in the far west, a new foundation around 770 BC, expanded in two generations to about 4,000 people. Urban growth continued unabated across Archaic times, and in 480 BC Athens' urban population must have numbered 20,000. Most sixth-century Greeks lived in settlements of a few thousand people (Morris 2005a).

#### *b) Peasants paying tax and rent*

The best evidence for Mycenaean taxation comes from Linear B tablets, bureaucratic records of palace transactions, but these are partial and selective. The rulers apparently procured staples (cereals, olives, wool) directly but left many non-staples to private producers. There were variations between palaces, and complex patterns within each sector of production. The palaces sometimes provided capital (land, seed, animals), with peasants providing labor; other times, palaces taxed flocks and land owned by non-palace personnel (Killen 1985; Halstead 2001). Statist models, emphasizing centralization and redistribution, were once popular. Redistribution clearly was a major economic strategy, but it now seems likely that many people remained outside palatial control (Galaty and Parkinson 1999).

Mycenaean bureaucracies and Linear B tablets disappeared after 1200, and elite abilities to tax declined. Homer's poetry, written down around 700 BC, is set in a vanished heroic age but probably reflects contemporary and recent institutions (Morris 2001). Homeric rulers collected "gifts" from their people, but taxation was unsystematic. Homer says nothing explicitly about rents, but implies that dependent agricultural labor and client craftsmen were common, but ostentatious elite spending was much lower than in Mycenaean times (Donlan 1997).

Some Archaic communities (notably Sparta) practiced serfdom, with state-owned bondsmen supporting small warrior elites, but in most city-states, most free men owned and farmed small plots of land. Richer citizens used imported chattel slaves to work larger plots, or rented land out through the market. Direct taxes were virtually non-existent. Communities normally met state expenses through revenues from state property or through indirect taxes, particularly harbor and market dues (Andreades 1933 remains the best review). State finance was largely a function of taxable trade, and some city-states saw a sharp increase in revenues after 550.

#### *c) Monuments*

The main Bronze Age monuments were elaborate palaces, combining political, religious, and economic functions. The first appeared around 2000 BC, on Crete, and by 1600 BC the largest, at Knossos, covered a hectare (Driessen et al. 2002). Cretans also built elaborate sanctuaries at the peaks of the highest mountains. Palaces appeared on the mainland around 1600. They were smaller than the Cretan structures, and organized

differently (Galaty and Parkinson 1999). Mainlanders built no peak sanctuaries, but the elite favored much more elaborate tombs than the Cretans.

No Dark Age monument begins to compare with the palaces. The largest known structure, is an apsidal mudbrick building of about 950 BC from Lefkandi, was 45 meters long, and would fit easily into the central court of the palace at Knossos. The building may have been a chief's house, or a monument to two people buried within it; either way, it was deliberately filled in and converted into a tumulus (Popham et al. 1993). Other Dark Age grave mounds survive, mostly on the northern fringes of the Greek world.

All across Greece, people started building temples around 750 BC. A few were *hekatompeda*, "hundred-footers," and by 675 the richest cities invested in all-stone temples. Thousands were built across the next two centuries. Temple-building peaked around 550-525, with some cities (particularly Akragas and Selinous in Sicily) erecting avenues of towering marble temples up to 80 meters long, ringed with columns and decorated with sculptures and paintings. Non-religious public buildings never competed with temples. Some graves had mounds or statues as markers, but there was little private display (Morris 1998).

#### d) *Ruling classes*

Mycenaean palaces had rulers called *wanakes*, surrounded by lesser officials, and rich aristocrats' mansions dotted the landscape (Laffineur and Niemeyer 1995; Rehak 1995). In Dark Age Greece, the most important men were called *basileis*, a corruption of the Mycenaean term *pa-si-re-u*. The *pa-si-re-u* had been a minor official in the palaces, but after 1200 this was apparently the highest rank that still had meaning. In Homer, *basileis* functioned as informal councils of warrior chiefs. They recognized Agamemnon as their leader, but he was merely *primus inter pares*, constantly open to challenges.

Dark Age burials are very homogeneous, but I have argued (Morris 1987) that there was a hidden exclusivity, with a wealthier stratum of farmers monopolizing archaeologically visible displays. There is evidence of similar restrictions on worship of the gods, with only a limited having access to rituals in chiefs' houses (Mazarakis Ainian 1997). These ritual distinctions may correspond to a social distinction between free and dependent peasants.

The *basileis* disappeared across the eighth and seventh centuries, replaced by aristocratic colleges. By Near Eastern standards, Greek aristocrats were poor, weak, and divided, but they were often willing to close ranks to prevent any one of their number emerging as sole ruler (*tyrannos*). The earliest law codes (c. 620 BC) focus on procedural rules, to block conversion of state offices into tyranny (Gagarin 1986). From the eighth century on, a powerful "middling ideology" set limits on the powers of aristocrats, who always depended heavily on popular backing. By 525, the poorer citizens in some states decided that they did not need aristocrats to make decisions for them, and increasingly took over political activity in mass assemblies of all adult males (Morris 2000: 155-91).

#### e) *Information-recording systems*

Mycenaean Linear B was a syllabic script, and all known examples come from palatial administration. Writing was probably restricted to a small scribal class. It disappeared after 1200, and the only example of writing from the next four centuries is a Semitic inscription on a bronze bowl in a tomb at Knossos, dating around 900 (Sznycer 1979).

Writing reappears around 750, with a brand-new alphabet, derived from Phoenician prototypes. Some Semiticists argue that the Greek script owes more to eleventh-century Phoenician inscriptions than eighth-century writing (Naveh 1973), and that Greeks were writing on perishable materials across the Dark Age, then shifted to potsherds around 750. However, the corpus of Phoenician texts is very small, and few scholars accept this theory.

From the outset, alphabetic Greek had many functions, and clearly was not controlled by scribes. The earliest texts are mostly poetic, scratched on pottery and stone (Powell 1991), but Archaic legal, economic, and religious inscriptions also survive. As many as 10 percent of fifth-century Athenian citizens may have been functionally literate (Harris 1989: 65-115).

*f) Long-distance trade*

Bronze Age *wanakes* exchanged luxury gifts with Near Eastern kings, and shipwrecks at Ulu Burun and Cape Gelidonia document bulk trade in metals (Cline 1994; Cline and Harris-Cline 1998). The excavated ships are small, but Aegean metallurgy depended on imported copper and tin. The total volume and economic importance of traded metal must have been high. Some Mycenaean pottery is known from Sardinia, Sicily, and south Italy, which may also be related to the metal trade (Vagnetti 1999). Interannual variability in rainfall always made crop yields unpredictable, and probably required bulk shipments of cereals in all periods of high population (Garnsey 1988: 8-16). Judging from the silence of the Linear B tablets, such trade was largely in private hands.

The new settlements that grew up in the shadow of the ruined palaces in the twelfth century retained attenuated contacts with the Near East, but trade declined sharply after a second wave of destructions c.1100. Very few Near Eastern objects are known from Greece, or Greek objects from the Near East, between 1050 and 950. Phoenician traders returned to the Aegean by 925, and even set up a typically Levantine shrine at Kommos in the ninth century (Shaw 1989). But extra-Aegean contacts only really took off after 800. Settlement of the coasts of Sicily and southern Italy, beginning in the 730s, doubled the arable land in Greek hands. Cereal exports were probably important from the beginning (De Angelis 2000; 2002), and were essential for the growth of Greek cities by 500. By the late sixth century, Greece had become the center of an unprecedented network of international trade in bulk commodities, and gains from trade were significantly improving living standards.

*g) Craft specialization and advanced art*

Mycenaean craft production reached remarkable levels. Palaces maintained their own workshops for some items, such as metalwork and perfumed oil, but left pottery to outside contractors (Laffineur and Betancourt 1997; Whitelaw 2001b). After 1200, many advanced skills (e.g., fresco-painting, gem-carving) quickly disappeared. The best vase painters retained high technical standards in the tenth and ninth centuries, but simplified their repertoire, and the large, highly standardized workshops of the Late Bronze Age almost certainly gave way to household-level artisans (van Wijngaarden 1999; Crielaard 1999). Homer describes *basileis* retaining craftsmen among their clients, and also *demioergoi*, “public workers” who might travel from town to town hawking their wares.

At their best, the Geometric pottery styles of the Dark Age were pleasing and carefully made, but skills advanced rapidly after 750. There is no evidence for concentration of production or state-owned workshops, but small, probably family firms proliferated. Pottery shops in Corinth, Ionia, and Athens produced millions of painted vessels, which were exported and imitated all around the Mediterranean (Stissi 1999). Sculptors and architects learned from Near Eastern and Egyptian artists, then surpassed them, reaching extraordinary levels of skill in the sixth century (Osborne 1998). There is some evidence of individual craftsmen working in several media, which diffused innovations quickly. Artists developed a sophisticated theoretical literature, although little of this now survives. Craft production was market-driven, and there are signs that potters carried out research on outlets (Osborne 1996). By 500, Aegean Greece had emerged as the most dynamic cultural center in the Mediterranean.

#### *h) Military power*

Bronze Age Crete is famous for its lack of fortifications and the peaceful themes of its art, but military symbolism dominated Mycenaean elite burials, and many sites were fortified, especially in the thirteenth century. The Linear B tablets show that palaces maintained standing armies and at least some ships, and significant (and expensive) chariot forces, although heavy infantry probably dominated Mycenaean battlefields (Laffineur 1999).

Grave goods suggest a shift from thrusting spears toward javelins after 1200, which probably reflects lighter infantry and skirmishing tactics. Fortifications were rare in the Dark Age, probably meaning that raids, rather than sieges and sustained campaigns, were normal. Homer's battle accounts are notoriously hard to interpret, but they most likely elaborate eighth-century practices, as bronze armor and massed infantry once more took on a serious role (van Wees 1997).

By 650 many city-states could field hundreds of bronze-armored hoplites, developing phalanx tactics that could be devastating on the right terrain. Greek hoplite mercenaries were in high demand in the Near East throughout Archaic and Classical times. Hoplites normally provided their own arms and armor, and volunteered their time for war and training. Hoplite warfare was capital-intensive, but the costs were privately borne. The main exception was Sparta, where serfdom supported a permanent hoplite army whose discipline and ferocity were incomparable. Sparta suffered no major defeats until 371 BC.

Greek warfare started changing rapidly around 550, as state income from taxes on trade took off. Greeks had adopted the triple-decked warships called triremes from Phoenicia around 700, and the first naval battle was fought around 664; but only after 550 could states afford proper navies (Wallinga 1993). In 483 the Athenians invested revenues from a rich silver strike into a fleet of 200 triremes (requiring 35,000-40,000 crewmen), and dominated the east Mediterranean throughout the fifth century. The increase in state spending power also transformed hoplite battle and fortifications in these years (van Wees 2004).

#### *i) Scale*

Mycenaean material culture dominated about 100,000 km<sup>2</sup>, covering the modern nation-state of Greece (except its northern part) with enclaves on the west coast of Turkey. The

population of this area was perhaps a million people (cf. Renfrew 1972: Table 14.IX; Branigan 2001: 46, Tables 4.1, 10.2), averaging 10 people/km<sup>2</sup>, though in the core areas around Mycenae and Pylos densities must have been two or three times as high. Only at Pylos can we estimate the territory controlled by a single state. Here, the Linear B tablets imply a territory of 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of perhaps 50,000 (i.e., 25 persons/km<sup>2</sup>; Bennet 1998).

Dark Age material culture has more regional variability, but by most definitions of “Greek,” the geographical scale of the system contracted slightly, to perhaps 75,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Population fell by half to two-thirds (Morris 2006), giving an average density of just 3-4 people/km<sup>2</sup>. There is no reliable way to reconstruct the size of political units.

Colonization extended Greek settlement to some 150,000 km<sup>2</sup> between the 730s and 500 BC, and total population rose to more than two million, giving an average density of 12-15/km<sup>2</sup>. The largest polity, Sparta, controlled about 8,500 km<sup>2</sup> after the eighth-century conquest of Messenia, with perhaps 150,000 people (17/km<sup>2</sup>). Sparta was a freakishly large state, but Athens and Akragas both had areas around 2,400 km<sup>2</sup>. By 500 BC Athens’ territory had probably 200,000 residents, with a very high density of 85/km<sup>2</sup> (rising to 130/km<sup>2</sup> in the fifth century). Akragas’ population and density are harder to estimate, but were probably about half of Athens’. Most city-states, however, had just a few hundred square kilometers of land, and populations in four figures.

#### *j) Standards of living*

In the 1980s, economic historians shifted from measuring living standards through real wages toward direct measures of bodily experience, such as mortality, morbidity, age-specific stature, housing, leisure, and education (e.g., Fogel 1993). Some of these are archaeologically visible (Steckel and Rose 2002; Morris 2005b).

Skeletal data collected by Lawrence Angel ( $n = 727$ ) suggest that men’s average age at death fell from 39.6 years in the Late Bronze Age to 39.0 years in the Dark Age, before improving to 44.1 years in Classical times, while women’s ages at death declined from 32.6 to 30.9 years across the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, rising to 36.8 years in Classical Greece (Bisel and Angel 1985). Physical anthropologists have made many advances since the 1970s, and data collected in the 1990s ( $n = 773$ ) produce lower ages at death, but preserve the same pattern of lower Dark Age than Mycenaean scores, and a Classical peak (Morris 2004: figure 2; 2006: table 9.3).

Health and nutrition produce messier patterns (Morris 2004: 715-19), but house sizes show the same trends as ages at death. The area of roofed space in the ground plan of the median house in thirteenth-century Greece was 70 m<sup>2</sup>. This fell to 45 m<sup>2</sup> in the ninth century, climbed slowly to 50 m<sup>2</sup> across the eighth and seventh centuries, then returned to 70 m<sup>2</sup> in the sixth century. Most of the improvement came after 550 BC, and the fifth-century median rose to 149 m<sup>2</sup> (Morris 2006: table 9.8). Quality of construction and the richness of domestic finds also declined in the Dark Age before rebounding in Archaic times.

### **III Evaluation of the pattern**

#### *a) Summary*

The data are very consistent across all ten categories reviewed in section II: Greece saw the collapse of complex society between 1200 and 1000 BC, stagnation between 1000 and 800, and regeneration after 800, with the pace of change accelerating after 550.

*b) Gradualist models*

Snodgrass' systematic (1971) survey of the evidence made the collapse-depression-regeneration model unchallenged by 1980, but in the 1990s several critics suggested that "Dark Age" is in fact an inappropriate label for the period 1000-800. In various ways, they argued for stronger continuities from Bronze Age to Archaic Greece, with more gradual changes in the twelfth and eighth centuries (e.g., S. Morris 1992a; Papadopoulos 1993; de Polignac 1995; Foxhall 1995).

New finds have certainly made the patterns less stark than they seemed when Snodgrass was writing *The Dark Age of Greece*. We now have some unambiguous evidence for religious activity between 1050 and 850, a handful of Greek artifacts from Syria and Italy between 1050 and 950, and remarkable finds from Lefkandi in the years 950-850. However, the critics—who consistently avoid quantitative analysis—have not made much effort to contextualize the new finds within the mass of previously accumulated data. The most influential gradualist treatment holds that "Recent archaeology [at Lefkandi] has dispelled Greece's 'Dark Age'" (S. Morris 1992a: 140). Yet the finds of the 1980s barely alter the statistics underpinning the collapse-depression-regeneration model, and can also be accommodated comfortably within more qualitative treatments of the traditional model (I. Morris 2000: 195-306).

Gradualist critics also suggest that placing Greece in a broader geographical context that includes the Near East dispels illusions of a Dark Age depression (e.g., S. Morris 1992b). They are right that no part of the Near East or Egypt seems to have suffered such an abrupt collapse as the Aegean after 1200, but the most recent surveys of Near Eastern history nevertheless reveal that by all the criteria discussed in section II above, the whole area from western Iran to Anatolia experienced decline in the twelfth and eleventh centuries and recovery from the ninth or eighth century on (e.g., Kitchen 1986; Kuhrt 1995: 385-646; van de Mieroop 2004: 161-252).

The major possible exception is Israel, where the Hebrew Bible says Solomon concentrated power as early as the 960s, waged expansionist wars, traded far and wide, and filled his kingdom with monuments (1 Kings 1-11). However, archaeologists have not found these monuments in Jerusalem, and Israel Finkelstein has recently proposed downdating the supposedly Solomonic levels at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer to the ninth century (Finkelstein 1996; 1999; 2004; Finkelstein and Piasezky 2003; cf. Gilboa and Sharon 2001; Franklin 2004). This remains controversial (e.g., Mazar 1997; Ben-Tor 2000; Bruins et al. 2003a, b), but Finkelstein's low chronology makes the data more consistent with the general east Mediterranean pattern, with post-Dark Age regeneration beginning in Israel in the ninth century, but only coming to Judah in the eighth (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 130-225).

*b) Explanations of regeneration*

Snodgrass (1980: 15-48) emphasized population decline between 1200 and 1000 BC and subsequent growth after 800 as the motors of collapse and regeneration. In the decline phase, Greece was the extreme case of a broader east Mediterranean and west Asian

collapse; in the growth phase, it was part of a Mediterranean-wide pattern (experienced as regeneration in the east Mediterranean). To explain such broad patterns, we should perhaps seek equally broad explanations. The shift from the warm, dry Sub-Boreal climate phase toward the cool, wet Sub-Atlantic phase in the ninth and eighth century (Bradley 1999: 15) must be relevant. Cooler, wetter weather after 900 would have relieved some of the problems of interannual variability in rainfall, with more dependable winter rains making farmers' lives easier, and would have improved the disease regime, since textual records from a range of premodern Mediterranean societies show that most deaths came in the hot summer months, from gastric complaints (Scheidel 2001: 1-118; 2006). The Sub-Boreal to Sub-Atlantic shift might also explain the fact that population trends in temperate Europe are the opposite of those in the Mediterranean, with growth in the eleventh and tenth centuries and decline in the eighth and seventh: cooler, wetter weather would have made it harder to farm the potentially fertile but heavy soils of valley bottoms, while exacerbating the lung diseases of the cold winter months that are the main killers north of the Alps (Bouzek 1982; Kristiansen 1998: 28-31, 408-410).

Some archaeologists have emphasized political rather than climatic factors, suggesting that as Assyrian military power revived in the late tenth century, Ashur's demands for tribute drove Phoenician merchants to travel further afield, partially converting the Mediterranean basin into a periphery to an Assyrian core (Sherratt and Sherratt 1993; Aubet 1993: 50-76; Gitin 1997; 2001; Frankenstein 1997: 35-64; Bierling 2002). In the ninth century, the Aegean was part of this periphery, but in the eighth and seventh centuries it emerged as a semi-periphery, before establishing itself as a core region in its own right in the sixth and fifth centuries.

These perspectives are mutually compatible: the improved climate and disease pool fueled population growth after 800, which increased competition all across western Asia and the Mediterranean, driving Assyrian military predation, Phoenician commercial expansion, and the regeneration of complex society in Greece. Most scholars have described the process in the language of world systems theory, but there are in fact few signs that the development of an east Mediterranean core was linked to the underdevelopment of a west Mediterranean peripheries, as world systems models require (Wallerstein 1974: 87-100, 310-24; cf. Frank 1993). I have proposed describing the accelerating economic and social integration after 800 as "Mediterraneanization," analogous to modern globalization, similarly producing new winners and losers within a context of generally rising standards of living (Morris 2003).

These macrolevel theories may account for the material bases of regeneration, but they do not explain why the second-generation societies of the eighth century and later took such different forms around the Mediterranean basin. Egypt and western Asia saw the revival of older, centralized kingdoms, but often with new levels of militarism; the Aegean saw new types of city-state, founded on egalitarian male citizenship; and the west Mediterranean, which shared in growth from the eighth century onward but had not experienced collapse in the twelfth and eleventh centuries, saw the rise of its first really powerful chiefs and cities. I have suggested (Morris 1998: 69-70) that differences in local histories explain these varied responses. In each of the three regions, previously existing class structures and cultures limited the range of responses available to the changing environment. In Assyrian western Asia, rising population triggered conflicts between the royal palace and local governors, decisively resolved in the monarchy's favor by Tiglath-

Pileser III after 744 BC. In the Aegean, there were no royal palaces or local governors in 800 BC; instead, the main struggle was between aristocrats who wished to centralize powers in their own hands and those who wished to preserve the broader dispersal of powers typical of the Dark Age. The main outcome was very weak oligarchies dependent on popular support ruling small city-states. In the west Mediterranean, it seems to have been easier for would-be chiefs and kings to defeat their rivals and establish one-man rule.

#### **IV Conclusion**

The Greek world saw the collapse of complex society between 1200 and 1000 BC, a long depression between 1000 and 800, and rapid regeneration after 800. Climate, disease, and demography were probably the ultimate causes of regeneration; but the Greeks' geopolitical situation was also critical, and very localized cultural and political factors determined the details of second-generation Greek complex societies. The Greek city-states developed peculiar forms of state power that are difficult to accommodate within standard evolutionary typologies (Morris 1997). However, despite the diffusion of political power through broadly defined male citizen communities and the general weakness of state offices, the regenerated Greek city-states mustered the military force to inflict shattering defeats on Carthage in the west and the mighty Persian Empire in the east in 480 BC, and emerged as centers of cultural innovation far outstripping their first-generation predecessors.

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