The Collapse of Palatial Society in LBA Greece and the Postpalatial Period

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PhD, Durham University, 2008

Abstract

This thesis offers a contextualised approach to the collapse of the Mycenaean palace societies of mainland Greece, c.1200BC, and aspects of Mycenaean society in the postpalatial (LHIIIC) period. It seeks to provide a fuller understanding of how these palace societies collapsed by considering them in the context of general theories of collapse, by examining and critiquing specific theories developed to account for the Mycenaean collapse, and by identifying and using as analogues social processes at work in other historical societies that experienced collapse, namely the Hittites, the Western Roman Empire and the Maya. These processes were affected by a range of other factors, which may or may not have contributed to collapse at any given time, and which depended on individual and group motivations, contemporary conditions, and unique socio-historical circumstances. Some collapse theories, in particular those that rely on migration, are dismissed, as is the possibility of creating a generalised theory of collapse. In this way, while no single novel theory of Mycenaean collapse is developed, it is hoped that a more convincing picture of collapse, as a process grounded in active social relationships, is given.

It is argued that collapse affected palatial areas and occurred over a period of time, but that areas without palace societies did not collapse, although they were affected by changing circumstances. In this context, settlement and mobility, as well as aspects of rulership and social structure in the postpalatial period are explored, and a main concern is to emphasise the differing nature of the evidence from areas that had been palatial and areas that had not been. This provides a more balanced view of postpalatial Greece, highlighting aspects of continuity from non-palatial areas as well as areas that had had palaces, and modifying a view that continuities should be sought merely from the archaeologically more prominent palatial Mycenaean society. It is hoped that a more nuanced view is offered of how continuities from palatial era society should be considered, and that the study may further throw some light on aspects of Mycenaean society before the collapse.
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Magazine/Journal Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Archäologischer Anzeiger</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEA</td>
<td>Aegean Archaeology</td>
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<td>AmAnt</td>
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<td>AmAnth</td>
<td>American Anthropologist</td>
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<td>AJA</td>
<td>American Journal of Archaeology</td>
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<td>Annual Review of Anthropology</td>
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<td>AS</td>
<td>Anatolian Studies</td>
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<td>BCH</td>
<td>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</td>
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<td>BIAL</td>
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<td>CA</td>
<td>Current Anthropology</td>
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<td>CQ</td>
<td>The Classical Quarterly, New Series</td>
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<td>CR</td>
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<td>EHR</td>
<td>The English Historical Review</td>
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<td>G&amp;R</td>
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<td>IJNA</td>
<td>The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology</td>
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<td>JAS</td>
<td>Journal of Archaeological Science</td>
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<td>JFA</td>
<td>Journal of Field Archaeology</td>
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<td>JHS</td>
<td>Journal of Hellenic Studies</td>
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<td>JMA</td>
<td>Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology</td>
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<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<td>JRZM</td>
<td>Jahrbuch des Römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz</td>
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<td>JWP</td>
<td>Journal of World Prehistory</td>
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<td>MAA</td>
<td>Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry</td>
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<td>OJA</td>
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<td>OpAth</td>
<td>Opuscula Atheniensia</td>
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<td>PBSR</td>
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<td>PCPS</td>
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<td>SMEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>Symbolae Osloenses</td>
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<td>WA</td>
<td>World Archaeology</td>
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