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Key Themes in Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology

Crisis Averted:

How the collapse of the palatial centers provided the perfect storm for prosperity and growth in the 12th/11th centuries BCE in the Central Mediterranean

MA Dissertation

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I. Introduction

Though the Late Bronze Age collapse of palatial centers throughout the eastern Mediterranean spelled out a significant shrinking of social, political, and economic relationships for most of the main administrative centers, certain areas of the Mediterranean were left to prosper in the aftermath. In particular, peripheral regions of Mycenaean Greece, such as Achaea, not only survived the so-called collapse of their neighbors, but continued and strengthened relationships with southeastern Italy, another area of the Mediterranean that did not witness a major socio-political contraction. This postpalatial relationship reached its zenith in the 12th and 11th centuries BCE and is evidenced by shared ceramic styles and techniques, burial contexts and processes, and changes in settlement patterns after the Mycenaean administrative center disappeared.

Occurrences such as the prosperous, productive western Peloponnesian-Italian relationship are quite indicative of the transition between the Late Bronze Age (LBA) and Early Iron Age (EIA) societies, though this time period is still thought of as one of minimalism and great unrest. While much ink has been spilled on the nature of Mycenaean palaces and the breadth of their control, scholarship has been slow to come around to analyzing the peripheral regions of Mycenaean territory in terms of post-palatial existence. By looking at peripheral regions of Mycenae, such as Achaea, and their interactions abroad, we are not only able to discern the social, political, and economic structures at play within those polities, but we are able to also outline the exercised scope of Mycenaean palatial influence prior to the 12th century 'collapse.'

Therefore, by looking at the nature of the relationship between Italy and the western Peloponnese we are able to correct and nuance our understanding of three distinct areas of research: (1) the system of Mycenaean palatial control in peripheral regions; (2) the varied nature of the Bronze Age collapse; and (3) the ability of certain areas to flourish in the Postpalatial period, despite the aforementioned crisis. In this paper, I first present the cases of the Mycenaean palatial centers, the Mycenaean peripheries, and contemporary Italy during the LBA, roughly the 14th and 13th centuries BCE. This allows for contextualization of the Mediterranean collapse as well as sets the stage for Post palatial interactions in the periphery and Italy, which are the subsequent two sections.

CHRONOLOGY AND SYNCHRONISMS

Since we are dealing with three distinct geographic and cultural regions, it is expected that the chronologies are equally as distinct. Presented in the chart below are the chronological terms and how they relate to the other areas of interest:

Mycenaean Palatial Centers	Peripheral Centers (Achaea)		Italy	Years BCE (low dating)
Late Helladic I (LH I)	LH I		Middle Bronze Age (1700 – 1350)	1550 – 1450
LH II A	LH II A			1450 - 1425
LH II B	LH II B			1425 – 1400
LH III A1	LH III A1			1400 – 1325
LH III A2	LH III A		Recent Bronze Age (1350 – 1150)	1325 – 1275
LH III B1	LH III B1			1275 – 1250
LH III B2	LH III B2	*Phase 1*		1250 – 1200
LH III C 1/Early	LH III C Early			1200 – 1150
		Phase 2		
LH III C Middle	LH III C Developed		Final Bronze Age (1150 – 950)	1150 – 1100
		Phase 3		
	LH III C Advanced			
		Phase 4		
LH III C Late Early Submycenaean Final Mycenaean Postpalatial	LH III C Late Mature Achaean			1100 – 1050
		Phase 5		
		Phase 6a		
	Submycenaean/ Early Protogeometric			
		Phase 6b		
Iron Age Protogeometric				1050 - 800

Table 1: Synchronization of chronology modeled after Moschos 2019, 238 and Van der Berg 2018. Achaean Phases 1 - 6b refer to phases of Achaea based on the development of local pottery styles and proposed by Moschos.

In particular, I will focus on the LH III C/Final Bronze Age and Submycenaean periods. This time frame, especially the Submycenaean, in the western Peloponnese has been particularly problematic to date,

define, and identify due to the difficulties in the record of the region.[1] As Achaea had a slightly different chronological development than its palatial counterpart, and a distinct political existence (more on that later), it was natural for Achaea to develop its own internal phases which we try and assign via pottery and metal workings.[2] A major problem arises, though, when determining whether an item belongs to the LH III C Late period (Phase 5 or 6a), or to the Submycenaean period (Phase 6a or 6b) since we have yet to ubiquitously determine if what is considered Submycenaean in Achaea is Submycenaean elsewhere in Greece.[3]

Achaea exists simultaneously within the broader Mycenaean chronology and as the head of a local western Peloponnesian system. Additionally, as is shown in the chart above, Phase 6a carries with it characteristics from the LH III C period into the Submycenaean. While this makes chronological dating difficult and often ambiguous, it does lend insight as to what the socio-economic state of Achaea and the western Peloponnese was during and immediately after the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial centers. Where most of mainland Greece presents a sharp chronological departure in the Submycenaean period, Achaea's record demonstrates a smooth transition with a dichotic decrease of Mycenaean wares and an increase in Final Bronze Age Italian material.[4] Achaea's continued and strengthened relationship with the Italian peninsula in the form of materials and goods exchange and technological transfer allows for synchronic dating with the central Mediterranean.

Overall, using dates referring to Achaea and the western Peloponnese allows us to evaluate the pre-collapse conditions as well as the post-collapse conditions looking both east and westward. Analyzing the Submycenaean period in Achaea, then, provides us with a unique case study against which elements of Mycenaean palatial structures and postpalatial political entities can be viewed. Understanding that the common thread in the chronology is based on Achaean material substantiates the claim that the collapse of the administrative centers did not usher the entire Mediterranean into a 'Dark Age,' as the Submycenaean period has previously been called.

II. The Palatial Period

THE CASE OF THE MYCENEAN PALATIAL COMPLEX, 1400 – 1200 BCE

In order to contextualize the impact of the absence of the Mycenaean administrative centers in the LH III C/postpalatial period had on peripheral regions such as Achaea, it is necessary to first outline their function, influence, and weight during the height of their power. First though, it is important to note that when referring to the Mycenaean palatial complex, the term Mycenaean refers to the entirety of the social, political, and economic situation experienced by the Aegean, not just Mycenae itself. There is no irrefutable evidence that demonstrates Mycenae acted as the center of the Mycenaean palatial stem, and therefore its name is more convention rather than transparent description.[5]

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[1] Eder 2009, 136.

[2] Moschos 2009, 236.

[3] Moschos 2009, 239; Deger-Jalkotzy 2014, 48.

[4] Moschos 2009, 237; Iacono 2012, 61.

[5] For comprehensive overview of the Mycenaean palatial system, see the Cambridge Companion to Aegean Prehistory, 2010. Specifically, the chapters Mycenaean States by Shelmerdine, Bennet, and Preston, and Economy and Administration by Shelmerdine and Bennet.

The apex of Mycenaean power of mainland Greece reigned from LH IIIA to LH IIIB. Monumental architecture, central administration, cult and religion, and economic dominance were cornerstones of the Mycenaean palaces.[6] Like other palace-centered polities in the Late Bronze Age, the Mycenaean palaces presumably held the seat of power, in this case the *wanax*, were responsible for some sort of control over agricultural surplus and/or surplus storage, and were heavily involved in the trading networks of the eastern Mediterranean. The term 'palace' is used loosely, and with understood nuance, referring to both the physical monumental space where administrative duties were carried out, and the metaphysical social space that palaces occupied as a controlling entity of political and economic order.[7] The "Mycenaean Heartland " centered around the Argolid and Mycenae, with surrounding centers in Boeotia, Attica, coastal Thessaly, Laconia, and Messenia producing palatial centers as well.[8]

Figure 1: Map showing settlements and cemeteries in LHIIIB period. Middleton 2008.

Although we often refer to Mycenae as a 'state,' it should be noted that its geographic boundaries are difficult to determine due to the dynamic and varied nature of Mycenaean involvements. Because of this, we can determine a center of the Mycenaean administrative and perhaps social sphere, but when radiating out into the peripheries, the case of Mycenaean influence and control is less concrete.[9]

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[6] Shelmerdine and Bennet 2010, 289.
[7] Shelmerdine and Bennet 2010, 290.
[8] Middleton 2008, 4.
[9] Middleton 2008, 5.

Another issue of interpretation is reconciling how the different palaces coexisted in close proximity to one another. For example, Mycenae and Tiryns both existed in very close, even visual, proximity to one another. Mycenae and Tiryns were large, monumental, fortified citadels containing administrative and political aspects.[10] If palaces were utilized as central administrations, each one with a wanax, how would two or more have coexisted in such close proximity? Mycenaean palatial control and influence, then, must have been rather fluid, operating in conjunction with one another with a class of elites connecting with one another and cementing control over the region. It seems likely that, if they wanted to, the entire Peloponnese could have been under strict Mycenaean rule- but this is not the case, as we will see.

The type of palatial control applied deals mainly with "the import of raw materials and the production, circulation and consumption of luxury items."[11] Additionally, they exerted jurisdiction over "technological skills, production processes, and labor organization."[12] However, the extent of involvement varied depending on the activity or resource. For the purposes of this paper, and to highlight how central palaces interacted with their peripheries and abroad, I will focus on palatial involvement with gift exchange, conspicuous consumption, and the administrative hand in agricultural production and cultivation.

The main contacts of the Mycenaean palatial system were their counterparts in the eastern Mediterranean- the Levant, the Hittites, and Egypt. They were able to interact so intensely and productively with one another because they shared similar palace-centered socio-political organizations.[13] The main form of diplomacy was based on the act of gift exchange between powers. Internally, prestige goods were utilized to represent and constantly negotiate the social and political hierarchy, usually in the form of grave goods. This meant that the palaces had to be heavily involved in the production and cultivation of valuable goods in the first place, taking prestige items to form a 'wealth economy.'[14]

The production of prestige goods and commodities that would be utilized in conspicuous consumption and gift exchange was carried out by cottage industry specialists who were tightly controlled by the palaces, a notion supported by the presence of prestige workshops in palaces themselves. Though it may be bias of the record, there is little to no evidence that demonstrates the processing of valuable materials (faience, ivory) outside of the palaces.[15] This would have taken away the opportunity of peripheral regions to utilize these materials, keeping their position in the political economy securely beneath that of the palatial centers.

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[10] Shelmerdine and Bennet 2010, 299.
[11] Eder 2007, 36.
[12] Eder 2007, 36.
[13] Eder and Jung 2005, 485.
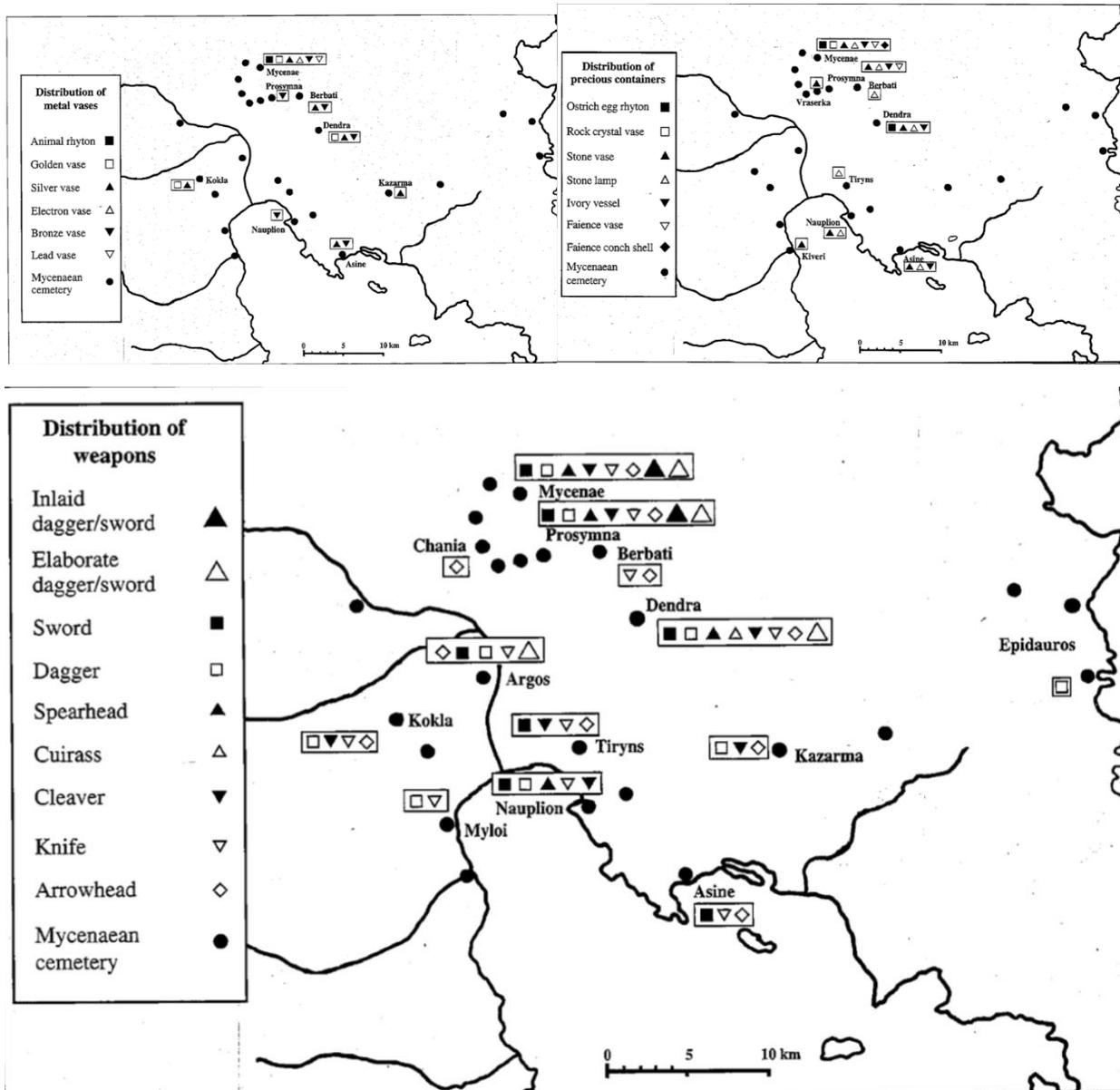[14] Voutsaki 2001, 195.
[15] Voutsaki 2001, 197.

Table 2: Voutsaki 2001. Maps showing distribution of weapons, metal vases, and precious containers- all considered precious goods.

Looking at the spatial distribution of valuable items in burial contexts during the palatial period, their density, and the items themselves, we can infer that the deposits were ritualized, elaborate, and tightly restricted to local elites engaging with each other on a regional level.[16] The social implications of wealthy burial goods worked to cement the descendants' place in the social hierarchy, both within the local settlement itself and within the broader regional axis of elites. The tightly restricted access, production, and circulation of prestige goods solely among the elite and their eastern Mediterranean counterparts did not allow for polities of different socio-political organizations to break into the network, establish their claim on goods, or contribute to broad wealth circulation.

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[16] Voutsaki 2001, 204.

The second arena that Mycenaean palaces were heavily involved in was agricultural production and cultivation. Resources like oil, linen, sheep and cereals were particularly policed because they could generate income from production and circulation.[17] Foxhall (1995) points out that the necessity of the palaces in successful agriculture was harder to structure and codify than their counterparts in Mesopotamia and Egypt, where regulation of irrigation to cultivate crops rested with the central administration, making adherence to and reliance on the socio-political structure vital to survival.[18] In Mycenaean Greece, however, agricultural production was largely at the mercy of the environment and unpredictable rainfall, be it controlled by the palaces or not. Therefore, in order for the central administration to pose itself as essential to farmers (and hence, essential to production, circulation, and economy), the palaces could either bail out farmers after a crop failure or provide access to capital and labor inputs to increase productivity.[19] Like the fluidity with palace cooperation amongst one another, the palatial interests in agriculture would have had to be carried out in a 'segmentary' fashion rather than via whole-scale mandates. Crisis in the fields then would require a direct response from the palace- a lack of which would impact and devastate the whole agricultural cycle.

Ultimately, the Mycenaean palaces participated in the broader eastern Mediterranean exchange network, functioning as a series of nodes. Within Greece, palaces were posited as social, political, and economic hubs of activity and control, exerting their domain over agriculture and goods. By controlling both of these spheres on a case by case basis, Mycenaean palaces interacted with their peripheries and hinterlands only to extract materials they wanted, be it prestige goods, foodstuff, or even manpower. Intense contact was maintained amongst elites across the palaces, as well as kingdoms of the Near East such in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Mycenaean contact was established and intensified when met with comparable political structures- explaining why interaction with the central Mediterranean and cooption of certain peripheries did not occur as totally as we might expect.

THE MYCENAEAN PERIPHERIES - ACHAEA

As we have seen above, the palatial centers of Mycenaean Greece and cemeteries were concentrated near the eastern coast of Greece or in the southwest of the Peloponnese, around Pylos. Palaces were thought to exert spheres of influence, sometimes overlapping with each other, but not fully encompassing the whole of Greece. This, combined with the varied characteristic of Mycenaean involvement with surrounding regions left outlying peripheral regions, that have not provided evidence for palatial structures, to develop separately from Mycenae, but still experienced some sort of contact with palatial centers.[20] In the LH IIIB period, the peripheral regions boasted "relative homogeneity of material culture," but did not follow a shared political system.[21] In this structure, polities existed alongside each other, interacting by choice with the Mycenaean state, but perhaps not in competition.

Achaea, located in the northwest region of the Peloponnese was in the sphere of at least two major palatial sites: Mycenae to the east, and Pylos to the south. However, Achaea did not develop as a palatial state nor did it boast any of the characteristic architectural or societal factors that went into

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[17] Foxhall 1995, 244.
[18] Foxhall 1995, 240.
[19] Foxhall 1995,
[20] Arena 2015, 1.
[21] Arena 2015, 2; Darcque 1996, 112.

palatial development (distinct from Mycenaean). The area boasts at least 70 sites, including both cemeteries and settlements/find spots dating from Neolithic to Protogeometric, with a large number chronologically concentrated in the LH I-III period.[22] In the Late Helladic period, Achaea was densely populated and robust, with settlements like Teikhos Dymaion being main cultural and political hubs, and over 219 chamber tombs alone.[23]Achaea, and probably other lesser documented regions, would have underwent social, political, and economic developments during LH IIIB alongside the seemingly dominant palatial structures.[24] However, on the basis of tomb style and pottery types utilized in the Late Helladic period, Achaea exemplifies a markedly Mycenaean character.[25]
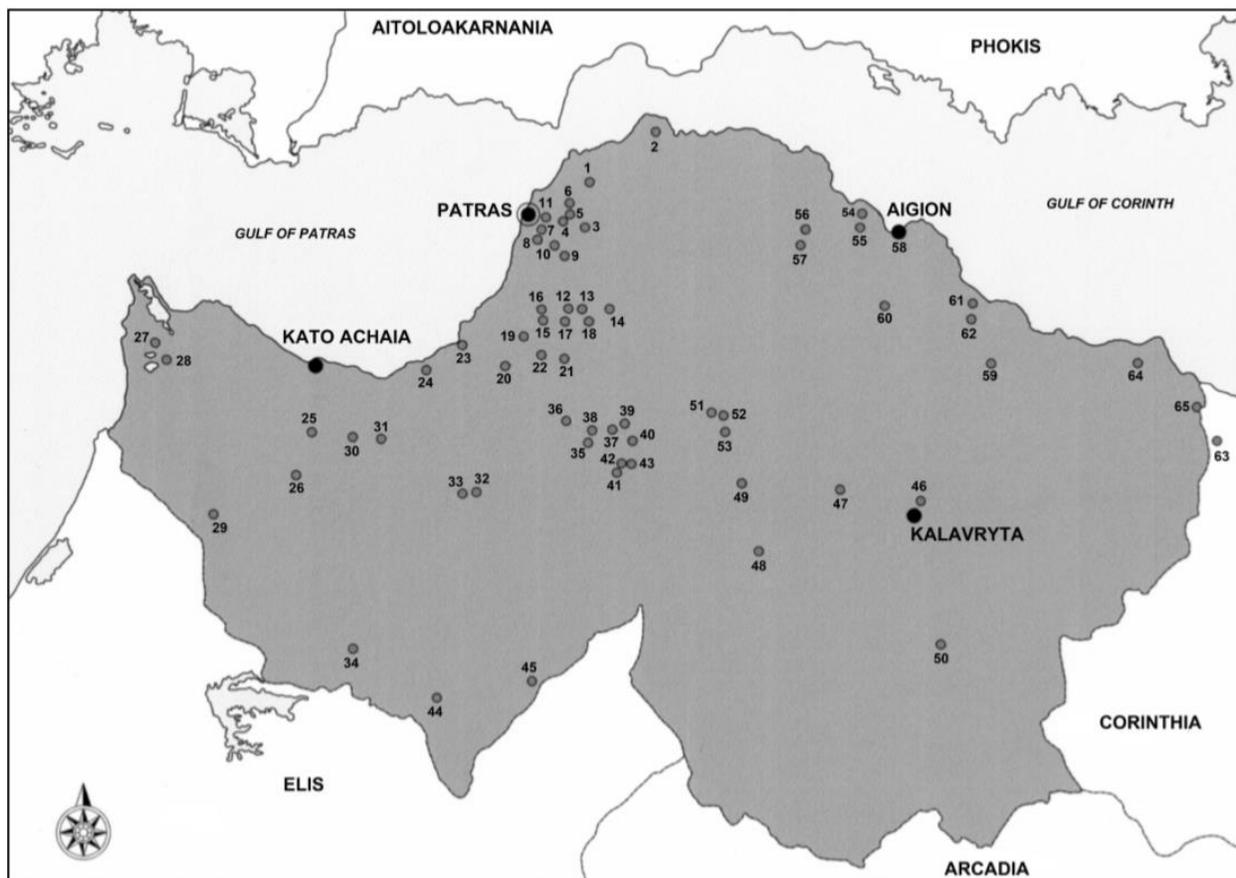

Figure 2: Map of Achaean sites during the Mycenaean Palatial period, roughly LH I-IIIA/B. Arena 2015.

Through analysis of peripheries, in the case of this paper, Achaea, during the palatial period, we are able to determine the influence and impact that Mycenae may have had on the region during the palace's height of power- a vital comparative background in order to contextualize the thriving socio-economic existence of Achaea after the palaces disappear.

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[22] Papadopoulos 1991, 31.
[23] Middleton 2008, 10; Papadopoulos 1991, 31.
[24] Middleton 2008, 10.
[25] Middleton 2008, 4.

LATE HELLADIC IIIA-B POLITICAL STRUCTURE

While we know with a rather solid grasp the political structures of Mycenaean palatial centers, the contemporary political structure of Achaea is less known. Since the exact political makeup is uncertain, it may be more useful to delineate what Achaea was *not.*

We know that the area never became palatial, as none of the architectural or cultural elements leading to a palatial administrative center have been found, such as a cult centers or megaron-centered building complexes with magazine, controlled access, and monumental architecture.[26] Two prominent theories to reconstruct the political organization of Achaea currently exist. One, proposed by Blintiff in 1977, conjects that Achaea functioned with two distinct state entities, Teichos Dymaion and Aigeira (recently, Patras has been identified as well into this group).[27] However, neither of these sites produce any sort of palatial architecture that would seemingly allow for central authority or control in the way a fully-formed state would need to demonstrate. Fortifications at both existed, but not until LH IIIC.[28] At Teichos Dymaion, no tholoi or substantially wealthy tombs have been uncovered, casting doubt on the idea that it would have been host to a seat of power. The second theory of political organization comes down through Renfrew and the Early State Module Theory, positing that western Achaea aligned itself with Elis to function more or less autonomously, while eastern Achaea and Aigialia depended on palaces of the Argolid.[29] This idea is similarly refuted due to a lack of monumental architectural features, especially in tombs, no complex buildings utilizing even a moderate organization of labor force, and no comparable system of economic administration.

In attempting to explain the geo-political distribution of people in Achaea, Petropoulos (2012) invokes Pausanias, who wrote that Achaea was populated by two separate groups, expelled from their own homelands by the Dorians during the collapse, settling in two different areas, which, up until that point, had been occupied by Ionians.[30] Studies by others suggest that Mycenaean sites increased at the end of the LH IIIC, whether due to the settling of refugees, a relocation of administrative centers, or a peaceful integration of different settlements.[31]

Overall, we can confidently rule out the potential that Achaea was occupied by or produced a palatial administration and economy and/or wanaktes. Instead, it is fathomable that power in Achaea rested in the hands of local elites who did not have an intense relationship with the palatial centers.[32] K. Kilian pushed back strongly against the notion of an Achaean subjugation to Mycenae, proposing that due to the evidence of LH IIIC, Achaea actually exerted influence on the Argolid, instead of the other way around.[33]

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[26] Arena 2015, 9.
[27] Blintiff 1977, 16.
[28] Arena 2015, 11..
[29] Renfrew 1977, 119.
[30] Paus., VII 1, 7-8; Petropoulos 2012, 196.
[31] Papadapoulos 1979, 175-176.
[32] Arena 2015, 9.
[33] Kilian 1981-1982, 154-159.

This idea of some sort of socio-politically stratified polity before a substantial migration, peaceful or not, of Mycenaeans is supported by prominent tombs from the LH IA and LH II-IIIA periods. In the chart below, tombs that demonstrate the existence of a local elite are indicated.

Site	Type of Tombs	Time Period	Characteristic Trait
Portes	1 cist tombs	LH I A	
Portes	2 tholoi	LH II -IIIA	
Kallithea: Laganidia	Tholos	LH IIB-IIIA	
Kallithea: Laganidia	Chamber tomb cemetery	LH II-IIIC	The tholos was at the center of cemetery
Pharai	2 tholoi	LH II-IIIA	Produced the Pharai Hoard of rich items
Petroto: Mygdalia	Tholos	LH IIB -IIIA1	
Voundeni: Amygdalia	Chamber tomb	LH IIIA	Monumental architecture

All of these tombs, especially the chamber tomb at Voundeni: Amygdalia, the tholoi in Pharai, and the cemetery complex at Kallithea: Laganidia prove that Achaea housed local elite with enough power, wealth, and resources to create rich tombs.[34] Some of these tombs (those at Kallithea and Pharai, for example) were abandoned at the end of the LH IIIA1 period, suggesting that there was a shift in local control, presumably to the Mycenaeans.[35] This type of visual eradication of ancestry often accompanies a dramatic shift in socio-political control, and with the destruction of these tombs immediately predating a so-called "Mycenaean koine in Achaea," it is fathomable that this would represent a sharp abandonment and break in cultural and political evidence.

However, not all tombs were plundered before the LHH IIIA2 period. In the case of Kallithea, we see a tholos tomb from LH IIB-IIIA with a cemetery of chamber tombs from LH II-IIIC encircling it. This demonstrates a continuation of social order and control, as opposed to a physical and psychological shift in power that may be read at other tombs sites. Additionally, it is important to note that the concept of monumentality is very much dependent on the local traditions and styles. In the case of Achaean burials then, the chamber tomb at Voundeni housing one male can conceivably be thought of as a monumental burial- its 19.80m dromos, 28 m² burial chamber, and rich grave goods, including seals and LH III A1 kylikes, all point towards the demonstrating of a social class with access to wealth and man power. While the long dromos is reminiscent of the trends of Mycenaean tholoi, the chamber tomb at the end

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[34] Arena 2015, 13.
[35] Arena 2013, 14; Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2011, 516.

instead of a corbelled vault ceiling indicate a different ruling class, following local trends and customs instead of relying on an afar palatial control or influence.

The burial at Pharai, with the accompanying 'Pharai hoard' boasted one silver goblet with eight repousse shields, bronze bowls, a bronze sword, and a bronze inlaid dagger of the type found Mycenae and Pylos. These wealthy grave goods are indicative of an elite warrior burial, not unlike what we would see in the Mycenaean record.[36] This is not only representative of a stratified elite and ability to negotiate social class via burial customs, but it demonstrates that some parts of Achaea had enough access and wealth to produce such prestige items.

In light of the burial evidence, then, we see clear attempts at communicating status that depart from the Mycenaean style of communication, indicating that those in power were local elites and not Mycenean migrants. Since many tombs have been looted a significant lack of evidence exists as to what accompanied these burials and what position these supposed elites occupied.

ACHAEAN CONTACTS PRE-COLLAPSE

Like when determining the socio-political makeup of Achaea, our evidence for external relations of Achaea pre-collapse is best determined through deposits of grave goods. In a typical society, prestige items and foreign objects would likely only be accessed by elite members. Presence of prestige items would signal an active control of resource mining and cooption on a local level, while foreign objects obviously demonstrate the participation in a broader network of trade with a gift exchange aspect. As a Mycenaean periphery, Achaea, politically autonomous or not, seems to have been a backseat participant in the Mediterranean network of trade, which was locally dominated in the Aegean and central Mediterranean unsurprisingly by the Mycenaean palatial complex. The lack of palatial complexes in Achaea, the rather humble burials (with a few exceptions), and the difference in communicating status in death supports the notion that Achaea did not exist as a central or even significant node in the Mediterranean exchange network.

Instead, during the palatial period, Achaea likely existed as an intermediate stopping point, particularly for materials like amber. While rich tombs in the Argolid, Attica, Boeotia, and Messenia provided an abundance of amber beads, amber was not produced in the region and thus had to be imported from other areas. Exchange routes have been mapped either from the Baltic Sea to the Aegean, via Thessaly, the Ionian Islands, and the Corinthian Gulf, or from the west via Zakynthos and Achaea.[37] The amber found in Achaean burials comes from Patras, dating to the LH IIIA/B period, while contemporary Apulia and Sicily tombs produced amber beads that signal another node on the amber route from central Europe.[38] Since the amber in Italy, Achaea, and Mycenae is Baltic, we can create a trade route connecting the European mining site, through Italy, then to Achaea, and finally to Mycenae, where the bulk of amber is found in burials. Achaea would have established contact with Italy, then, during the palatial period, moving amber to the Peloponnese and then exchanging in some fashion with the Mycenaean palatial centers. The abundance of amber in Mycenaean burials, and the limited evidence of

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[36] Papazoglou-Manioudaki 2015, 321.
[37] Eder 2007, 41.
[38] Kristiansen and Suchowska-Ducke 2015, 369.

it in Achaean, though, suggests that Mycenae was still the dominant and controlling player in this specific trade network.

In sum, the LH I-IIIA/B period in Achaea is one shrouded in uncertainty, especially when compared to the contemporary situation in Mycenae. For the purposes of this paper, the important takeaways regarding the palatial period existence of Achaea concerns its involvement and knowledge of the active trade network (even if functioning just as a intermediary node along the amber route), the ability and desire to demonstrate social class through burial contexts, and the apparent continuation of at least some of the elite from the pre-palatial period into the late palatial period. The absence of palace structures in Achaea is significant because if the area was to be anything more than a periphery in the eyes of the Mycenaean administration, they would have undoubtedly built the infrastructure to support such a use. Thus, an organization of local elite with access to some prestige goods and the ability to facilitate trade and contacts with the west remain the characteristics of palatial Achaea.

CONTEMPORARY ITALY

The Middle and Recent Bronze Ages in Italy, corresponding to roughly 2200-1150 BCE, were formative years in the development of Italian social hierarchy and economic potential. The evolution of Italy from centering on small village organization to large, urban or proto-urban centers occurred at the same moment in which large scale palatial economies were controlling and facilitating the economy in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.[39] As the eastern Mediterranean trade network revolved largely on polities utilizing comparable systems of socio-political organization (e.g., palaces), the fact that contemporary Italy lacked these structures largely precluded their involvement, though interaction did exist, especially with the Aegean, though on a notably smaller scale.[40] By looking at the development of Italian societies up until the Late Bronze age collapse, we are able to outline the existing patterns and hierarchies that would have led to post-palatial interaction on such a scale that existed and which will be dealt with further down in this paper.

Early Bronze Age Italy

Early Bronze Age Italy (2ca. 300 – 1700 bce) was marked by what Peroni has previously called "lineage-based communities with stable socio-economic differentiation."[41] Here, as was commonly the case in the Aegean Early Bronze Age as well, kinship groups were the primary driving factor behind social and political organization. Community-wide functions, such as metal production, would have been carried out (likely) by male warriors.[42] In the EBA period in Italy, I want to draw specific attention to two major developments that significantly impacted the processes and systems of the successive Middle and Recent Bronze Ages. While chronologically this is a few hundred years before Italy established contacts with Mycenae, the trajectory of political and social development in Italy during the Early Bronze Age was drastically different from that of the developing palatial societies in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean. It is vital to keep this disparity in development in mind when analyzing the manner in

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[39] Cardarelli 2015, 181.
[40] Eder and Jung 2005, 485.
[41] Peroni 1996, 3-43
[42] Cardarelli 2015, 157.

which contact was first established and how and why it was established in the first place, as the Early Bronze Age Italian situation immediately feeds into the Middle and Late Bronze Age structures.

The first new aspect of EBA Italian society that deserves significant attention is the advancements made in the processing and forging of metals. During the preceding Copper Age, evidence of metalworking is limited to pictorial representations of weapon groups on rocks or stelae, such as at Masso di Cemmo 2 in Valcammonia.[43] Here, two groups of weapons, one consisting of 10 daggers and the other containing daggers, halberds, and axes, were incised near an image of the sun. Although confidently assuming these representations were indicative of metal weaponry in Italian practice, we can still claim that metal objects and metalworking technology was very limited, making its comparatively robust appearance in the Early Bronze Age all the more significant. Items produced were mainly prestige goods that would have helped to define an emerging elite class, which would have also controlled the production and consumption of prestige goods in the first place.[44] Where the previous Copper Age societal organization would not have allowed for such a horizontal control of goods production on the basis of cross-kin subjugation, the emerging socio-political system based on an evolving consolidation of power allowed those in charge, usually warriors, to manage and oversee elements of mining, production, and consumption across a handful of kin groups.

The second aspect of note that developed in the EBA period was the tendency to settle areas for a long period of time- sometimes centuries. The introduction of this type of settlement pattern allowed communities to begin developing a sense of identity in relation to both the physical landscape and to the people that made up the community itself, related or not.[45] Investments in long term activities, like community infrastructure such as cemeteries, land cultivation, and the beginnings of social stratification were all outputs of these long-occupied settlements.[46] Main settlement areas are found in lakeside pile dwelling and lakeside communities of the Polada culture in northern Italy and in Fucino (Apuila) and Velino (Rieti).These settlements persisted through the Middle and Recent Bronze Ages and became some of the most prominent centers of occupation and production in the successive centuries.[47]

In terms of internal social stratification, data is relatively scarce and is largely confined to burial sites. In southern Italy in the late Early Bronze Age, apparent warrior burials have been uncovered, defined so on the basis of solid-hilt daggers and axes.[48] Examples of the solid-hilt daggers have been found in central-northern Italy in pile-dwelling villages, suggesting that the distribution of these types of daggers was broad, though their function may have been dependent on the region itself. On the basis of bronze artefacts found in warrior tombs, and the number of warrior tombs found throughout EBA Italy, the social stratification apparently rests on the consolidation of warrior power as the first definable instance of hierarchical structure outside the kin group.

Middle and early Recent Bronze Age Italy/ Late Helladic I - II

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[43] Cardarelli 2015, 157.
[44] Cardarelli 2015, 157.
[45] Cardarelli 2015, 159.
[46] Peroni 1996, 8-11.
[47] Ialongo 2007; Blake 2014, 211.
[48] Cardarelli 2015, 164.

Transitioning into the Middle and Recent Bronze Ages (c. 1700-1150 bce), Italy experienced a moment of social, political, and economic consolidation that is separate from familial or kinship ties and almost entirely reliant on the codification of a social hierarchy. Social complexity, while not entirely clear to us now, consisted of fortified settlements in response to real or perceived threats, a conscious effort to distinguish social status in death via wealthy and warrior-like grave goods, and craft specialization, in particular with regards to Aegean style pottery production.[49]

In terms of settlement patterns, the Middle Bronze Age was characterized by a general population growth. Areas such as Istria and Puglia (Apuila) developed fortifications around settlements, both natural and manmade out of stone.[50] The presence of these fortifications, though, does not immediately mean that the construction was organized and facilitated via socially stratified elite. In fact, the fortifications at Coppa Nevigata, for example, experienced several different construction techniques, suggesting that the construction was carried out by different groups tagging off, likely among different kinship groups.[51]

Also at Coppa Nevigata were distinct storage or "warehousing areas" throughout the site that potentially belonged to different kinship groups.[52] This proves that in the Middle Bronze Age period of Coppa Nevigata, a hierarchical structure was either nonexistent, or in its infancy, not to be fully stratified until the advanced phase of the Recent Bronze Age. However, in burials at Trinitapoli in northern Puglia, excavations produced a large quantity of socially stratified hypogea burials, or underground burials.[53] In these burials, adult males were entombed with swords, daggers, and knives, while the women were buried with varying amounts of ornaments. These grave deposits not only differentiated the rank between those buried in the surrounding hypogea, but from the broader community as well, as these burials were far and above the wealthiest of the area. The apparent lack of universal elite hegemony is important to note here because it means that in the Middle Bronze Age, the point in which the Minoans on Crete were engaging intensely with the eastern Mediterranean, Italy did not support a comparable social structure for interaction, cutting them out of any potential exchange network linking to the eastern Mediterranean.

During the advanced stage of the Middle Bronze Age and the beginning of the Recent Bronze Age (analogous to LH I – II), however, we see clear signs of an elite stratification on the basis of burials and concentrations of prestige goods. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this is also the period where the first instances of significant interaction with the Aegean is noted in the material record.[54] Mainly concentrated in southeastern Italy, imported Aegean ceramics and locally produced Aegean style pottery have been uncovered in large amounts at Scoglio del Tonno and Roca, for example.[55]

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[49] Blake 2014, 211.
[50] Cazzella and Recchia 2013, 47-49.
[51] Cardarelli 2015, 180.
[52] Cardarelli 2015, 180.
[53] Cardarelli 2015, 181
[54] Cardarelli 2015, 183.
[55] Blake 2014, 208.

Also in the advanced stage of the MBA and RBA, burial practices shift to produce a marked reduction in weapons as grave goods, as well as a reduction in grave goods in general, and an increase in cremation and urn burials.[56]

Overall, the Middle Bronze Age and early Recent Bronze Age in Italy are characterized by a significant shift towards social and political consolidation and social complexity in the hands of stratified elite, while contacts with the Aegean are established, but not quite exploited.

Advanced Recent Bronze age/Late Helladic III A/B

Like the preceding periods, the advanced Recent Bronze Age in Italy witnessed an increase in population and settlement numbers, with a still gradual movement towards more clearly defined social hierarchies. Both sides of the Italian peninsula were now actively engaged in trade, while coastal centers continue to dominate in terms of settlement size and wealth accumulation.[57] Social inequality was underlined by the ability to access, control, and distribute resources such as metals and pottery.[58] This produced a class of elites, whether recognized just in that community or in the broader regions, that had the ability to facilitate interactions with foreign groups, such as envoys or traders from Mycenaean palaces. Still, though, the image is all but transparent when it comes to internal organization and the methods and structures utilized for exerting control.
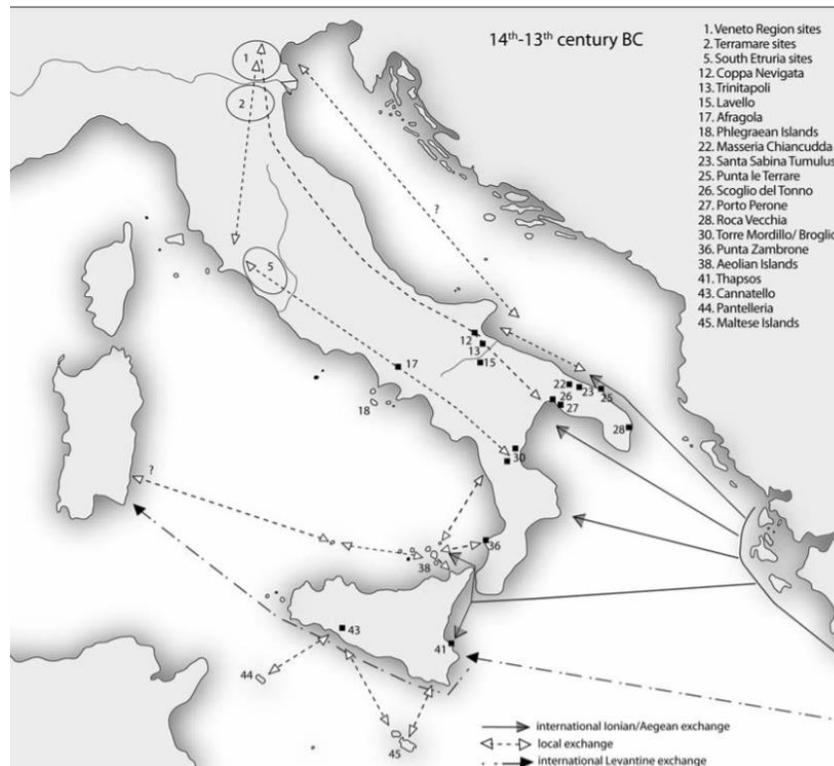

Figure 3: Exchange interactions during the 14th and 13th century. Cazzella and Recchia 2009.

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[56] Cardarelli 2015, 186.
[57] Cazzella 2009, 162.
[58] Cardarelli 2015, 190.

The situation in Italy in the advanced Recent Bronze Age, corresponding to LH IIIA/beginning of the Palatial period in Greece, incorporated Sicily and Sardinia into the intensifying contacts of the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian coasts with the Aegean.[59] Additionally, Cyprus began robust trade with Italy, a component which remains throughout the LH III period. In the LH IIIB period, a significant shift in the ceramic record occurs with the production of local copies of Mycenaean ware and the introduction of Italo-Mycenaean ware.[60]

At this point, the main settlement regions are at Veneto and Terramare in northern Italy, the Apulia region along the Adriatic coast such as Scoglio del Tonna and Roca Vecchia, eastern Sicily at Thapsos, the Aeolian islands, and the western coast of Italy along the Tyrrhenian sea, particularly in the area of Etruria. There is no evidence to support the idea that there was a defined structure of inter-settlement hierarchy, though there is evidence that leads us to believe that communities were in *increased* competition with one another.[61] In the same vein, especially in the Apulia region, no one settlement dominated the landscape until the 14th and 13th centuries, leaving it (presumably) up to incoming seafarers to determine which sites they would contact first.[62] This would have undoubtedly impacted the development of those sites selected for repeated interactions, such as the prosperous trajectory at Roca Vecchia and Scoglio del Tonno. An in depth look at the former settlement allows us to interpret the social, political, and economic structures that facilitated intensive Mycenaean interaction before the palatial collapse, forming the basis of a comparative case study during the LH IIIC period.

Roca Vecchia is located on its own small peninsula on the Adriatic with a lagoon that acted as an "internal basin," not unlike the ideal ports of contemporary Aegean, like at Pylos.[63] The site was occupied from the 17th – 11th centuries bce. This long-term settlement period is in line with the trend set in the preceding period to occupy sites for centuries, creating physical ties to the land and allowing social complexity and hierarchies to develop and take root. The early Middle Bronze Age fortifications consisted of 20-meter thick walls running the length of the isthmus and surrounded by a ditch.[64] Guglielmino suggests that the complexity, monumentality, and building techniques of the fortification wall points to an Eastern and Aegean influence, contact between the two regions supported by evidence of Middle Helladic pottery and even a potential Minoan duck pyxis.[65]

In the early 14th century, Roca Vecchia experienced some type of war event, potentially siege, that produced significant burnt destruction.[66] Skeletons from this phase have been recovered inside the main gate and in postern C with traces of cutting blade wounds on ribs and with large deposits of *impasto* vases.[67] These skeletons were unburied and consist of one adult male and woman, and five children from ages 6 to 16.[68]

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[59] Betelli 2012, 209.
[60] Blake 2008, 5; Betelli 2015, 215.
[61] Cardarelli 2015, 189.
[62] Cazzella and Recchia 2009, 30.
[63] Guglielmino 2006, 87-88.
[64] Pagliara 2005, 629-635; Guglielmino 2006, 88.
[65] Guglielmino 2006, 88-90.
[66] Guglielmino 2006, 88; Cazzella and Recchia 2009, 32.
[67] Guglielmino 2006, 90.
[68] Fabbri 2002, 193-203.

After the destruction and moving into the Recent Bronze Age, the fortifications of the settlement were rebuilt, following the plan of the Middle Bronze Age structures. The new fortification utilized ashlar masonry, floors of limestone and stones, and evidence for deliberate open spaces. Guglielmino also reports that in the 2005 season, circular or apsed huts were uncovered.[69] Ceramic material from the Recent Bronze Age levels reveals mainly local ware with some imports from Terramare area, and a large quantity of Aegean sherds, more than any other area in Italy. More than 4000 sherds have been recovered and identified as Aegean origin, and dating between LH IIIB and LH IIIC Middle- pre-palatial collapse.[70] Most of the vessels deal with consumption, represented by deep bowls and craters. This particular class of ceramic ware could indicate that the local elite were participating in some sort of conspicuous consumption, either using the Aegean material as status markers, or using it with Aegean envoys as a show of hospitality. Either scenario demonstrates the existence of a socially stratified elite with enough local 'acceptance' that foreign parties knew to carry out diplomatic exchanges with them specifically.[71]

Figure 4:SItes with Aegean Pottery, imports and locally produced. Bettelli 2012.

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[69] Guglielmino 2006, 92.
[70] Guglielmino 2006, 93.
[71] Militello 2005, 592.

The ceramic situation at Roca Vecchia, then, draws into question the nature of Italian and Mycenaean interaction in the LH IIIA/B periods- was it 'intensive' or was it 'systematic'?[72] The imported Mycenaean pottery, even at sites like Roca Vecchia where its presence amounts for 10% of the total assemblage in some strata,[73] represents a very small ceramic assemblage, suggesting an equally "limited number of visits by Mycenaeans to Italy."[74] Blake suggests that the reason for low numbers of Mycenaean ceramic, combined with the purported ease that Mycenaeans would have had with production and shipment of ceramics to Italy, is due to a corresponding low demand by the Italic people themselves, pushing back against any suggestion of an intensive trade relationship.[75] While I concede that this is a potential case, the presence of Mycenaean ware at principal ports and then the subsequent development of Italo-Mycenaean wares by LH IIIB suggests that Italian communities did desire these products and did hold them to a significant standard, or else local imitations and hybrid material would not have been developed. In this light, I tend to err on the side of intensive contacts, with certain settlements establishing and maintaining contacts with the Aegean on autonomous levels.

As for a systematic type of trade between Italy and Mycenaean Greece, a level of consistency on both ends would need to be present.[76] The varying level of imports between regions of Italy alone is incredibly diverse, from the almost purely imported ceramic assemblages of Sicily, to the near absence of Mycenaean wares in north Italy, the local domination of southern Italic assemblages, and a nearly equal coexistence of imports and local material in Sardinia.[77] As there is no consistent production source in Mycenaean Greece for the ceramic products to begin with, as different palaces may or may not have produced material for export and may have stopped or started at different periods of time, a systematic trade relationship could not have existed.

In sum, the LH III A/B period in Italy, which saw substantial consolidation of power and an increase in social stratification, also experienced intensive contacts with the Mycenaean palaces. However, I do not propose that the contacts with Mycenae are to be credited with the move towards social complexity throughout Italy. On the contrary, it appears that the development of social, political, and economic institutions comparable in kind to those present in Mycenae (on the basis of a stratified elite and an 'accepting' wider population, not palatial structures as a whole), allowed for continued interaction between the two regions. Therefore, at the moment immediately preceding the palatial collapse of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean, Italian polities were functioning autonomously and independent from any larger political system, and from each other for that matter, and were participating in the Mediterranean trade network out of desire alone, not necessity. Interestingly enough, this also applies to Achaea, despite the closer proximity to the palaces, signaling that their social and political existence was entirely independent from the palatial complexes and could stand alone regardless of interactions looking eastward.

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[72] Blake 2008, 15.
[73] Guglielmino 2006, 93.
[74] Blake 2008, 15.
[75] Blake 2008, 15.
[76] Blake 2008, 15.
[77] Jones, Levi, and Bettelli 2005, 540.

III. The Crisis Years

The widespread 'collapse' or 'crisis' of the end of the Bronze Age has long been deemed the event that catapulted the palatial systems of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean into centuries of darkness. The collapse ushered in dilapidated economic systems on both the regional and international level, large population movements, and the breakdown of prominent political relationships and powers. Contributing factors have been identified in environmental changes like drought, famine, and earthquakes, while socio-political aspects such as invading sea-peoples, internal conflict, and mass migrations also occur immediately before abandonment.[78] Destruction events span a broad range chronologically, in type, and in severity- no one event being the sole cause. Still, by most accounts, abandonments and destructions were complete by the end of the LH IIIB2 period, or around 1200 bce.[79]

As this period, henceforth known as the crisis years, marks the end of the formal palatial period in Greece, as well as the beginning of the period of prosperity for Achaea and southern Italy, a critical analysis of the evidence, both theoretical and physical, is called for. This will allow us to see which systems of the palatial period continued, which systems were abandoned, and, most of all, the landscape the crisis years formed that led to economic success for Achaea.

THEORY OF COLLAPSE

Before looking at the physical causes and results of the crisis years, it's important to present the existing theoretical framework and scholarship that shapes the analysis of the period in the first place. Much work has been carried out in regard to the notion of a collapse in a complex society in general, as well as analysis of the Bronze Age collapse, specifically.

In understanding societal collapse as a broad category, it's useful to pinpoint the vulnerable aspects of a growing society's makeup, be it institutional overstretching of resources, inability to thwart livelihood threats such as crop failures, and/or general stability of social, political, and economic integration. Yoffee (2006) suggested that in order to study collapse, the rise of the society must first be studied and understood, positing that collapse is the result of a breakdown of institutional "sociocultural integration."[80] A large takeaway from Yoffee rests on the notion that "emergent and early states were not necessarily stable or long-lasting socio-political structures," meaning that their collapse did not necessitate or even reasonably suggest that there must have existed external factors facilitating demise.[81] Additionally, Yoffee suggests that these early states could realistically exist with identifiable factors of decline. This is achieved on the basis that complex societies are made out of lower, intermediate, and upper level units that forge connections both horizontally and vertically, where the lower and intermediate level unity of society, economics, and even politics predate those of the upper unit.[82] Collapse of the socio-political model, then, would disenfranchise the upper level elite while leaving the lower and intermediate units to "regenerate" in the post-collapse years, forming new hierarchical arrangements based in the new reality and economic entanglements.[83] This idea is

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[78] Knapp and Manning 2016, 100.
[79] Middleton 2007, 4.
[80] Yoffee 2006, 131.
[81] Middleton 2007, 25.
[82] Middleton 2007, 26.
[83] Yoffee 2006, 137.

particularly important for the use of this paper, as the continuation of Mycenaean periphery, Achaea, is reliant on some sort of social reorganization of the economy and political control. Further, Yoffee's notion that societies with emerging social complexity can regress in stages of development quite naturally contextualizes the coexistence of Mycenaean palaces and local Achaean power structures functioning side by side. Utilizing this lens to view the crisis years in the Peloponnese provides us with a snapshot of different stages in sociocultural evolution, without implying that Achaea would have eventually become palatial, or that it aimed to in the first place.

In a more specialized approach, Colin Renfrew in 1979 presented the events of the LH IIIB period throughout the eastern Mediterranean as a part of a total systems collapse.[84] In this approach, Renfrew draws out four characteristics of a systems collapse: (1) the central administrative organization collapses, (2) the elite class in power disappears, (3) the centralized economy weakens until it disappears, and (4) there is a notable shift in settlement patterns coupled with population decline.[85] These events would not occur overnight, or even in a single decade, but may have taken a century to be realized, resulting in a shift to a notably more simplistic model of social complexity coupled with much lower levels of "sociopolitical integration."[86] All of the factors Renfrew noted that must be present for a systems collapse have been identified in Mycenae and the broader eastern Mediterranean network of political and economic relationships they were party to.

However, not everyone agrees with Renfrew that a domino-effect, systems collapse, accounting for internal and external fluctuations, is the reason behind the large-scale dismantling of Mediterranean palatial powers. For example, Drews (1993) believes that the collapse was a "terrifying" ordeal by all those impacted and was led by changes in warfare, Rutter (1975) favors an invader hypothesis, and more recently, Dickinson (2006) points to a broad range of factors all acting as kindling to a larger combustion.[87] Recent extensive studies carried out by Cline (2014) and Knapp and Manning (2016) address the crisis years in the Aegean among the wider Mediterranean, attempting to disengage the notion of a singular cause to any sort of systemic decline.[88]

CRISIS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN?

In looking at specific evidence of crisis or collapse throughout the Mediterranean, we are met with a high level of variability. Despite the prominent rhetoric of the early 20th century, what followed the crisis years was no 'dark age.' In fact, in the Aegean, in the Hittite Empire, in Mesopotamia, and even in Egypt, the post-crisis socio-political landscape experienced reorganizations and lateral shifts in power as opposed to a complete social, political, and economic disappearance, which a term like 'dark ages' strongly suggests. By a lateral shift in power or reorganization, I mean that the community's existing elite are knocked out of power and replaced by another state-centered polity, or the central arena of the administration is geographically moved to be housed by another city, with concessions for some socio-political changes.

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[84] Renfrew 1979.
[85] Renfrew 1979 in Cline 2014, 161.
[86] Cline 2014, 161.
[87] Drews 1993, 33-93; Rutter 1975; 1990; Dickinson 2006, 54-56
[88] Cline 2014, 162; Knapp and Manning 2016, 137 – 138.

Outside the Aegean, and speaking then to the broader processes of the crisis years, lateral shifts in power are exhibited in places like Tell-Tayinat in Mesopotamia, meaning that there was not a complete wipeout of ruling elite, nor was there a unilateral breakdown of central administration and socio-political integration.[89] Tell-Tayinat witnessed a population migration to the city, perhaps due to things like drought or famine in the centrally controlled Hittite territory. The movement of people, particularly second-level elites, to Tell-Tayinat meant there was an interruption of traditional authority and ruling elite. However, Hittite material culture, as is evidenced by continued and shared pottery trends from pre-collapse times and a notable presence of elite at Tell-Tayinat proves that the Hittite's as a socio-cultural group did not disappear, they just reorganized politically and economically along a different axis, in a different city. Tell-Tayinat is just one of several representative studies showcasing the variability in 'crisis' reaction, and embodies the notion that a crisis does necessarily mean a collapse.

This type of lateral shift and reorganization that occurred in the eastern Mediterranean makes the economic growth and flourishing of Achaea and southern Italy less surprising. In fact, understanding that other societies continued after the crisis years, sometimes only with minor adjustments, is paramount in reading the situation at Achaea and southern Italy. In this approach, we must look first at the evidence of 'crisis' present in the Mycenean palatial system and account for any weaknesses already in place-identifying areas that, once the palatial control disappeared, left a power vacuum for polities like Achaea to fill.

DESTRUCTIONS IN MYCENAEAN GREECE

The precipice of the crisis years was originally marked by a series of destructions and abandonments of sites throughout the Aegean and all dating to ca. 1200 bce.[90] The general view that was formed in the early 20th century and has remained relatively commonplace up until today is that this destruction level immediately preceded and marked the beginning of the 'Dark Ages,' lasting until 700 bce.[91] Noting and fleshing out the causes of the collapse helps us to understand *how* the non-palatial entities were able to escape wholescale destruction. Further, it establishes the weaknesses present in the palatial system of resource and territorial control, leading to their lack of permeance in places like Achaea and Italy. In presenting the specific evidence for destruction, abandonment, and collapse in the Aegean, the table below shows the destruction at Mycenae, the immediately surrounding areas, and the time span and cause of their destruction.[92]

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[89] Welton 2019, 292; Martin 2008.
[90] Drews 1993, 8.
[91] Morris 1997, 87.
[92] Middleton 2007, 14-15

Mycenaean Structure/Site	Type of Destruction	Time Period
Ramp House	Unclear	LH IIIA1 (1400-1375 BCE)
Pillar Basement	(*perhaps*) Earthquake	LH IIIA2 (1375-1300 BCE)
Petsas' House, Second Cyclopean Terrace House, House of the Wine Merchant, House of Lead	Unclear, but potentially earthquake as it is contemporary with the Pillar Basement destruction	LH IIIA2 (1375-1300 BCE)
Ivory House	Unclear – potential earthquake as it is contemporary with Panaghia Houses I and II	LH IIIB1 (1300-1225 BCE)
Cult Center	Unclear - potential earthquake as it is contemporary with Panaghia Houses I and II	LH IIIB1 (1300-1225 BCE)
East Wing	Unclear - potential earthquake as it is contemporary with Panaghia Houses I and II	LH IIIB1 (1300-1225 BCE)
House of Oil Merchant	Unclear - potential earthquake as it is contemporary with Panaghia Houses I and II	LH IIIB1 (1300-1225 BCE)
Panaghia Houses I and II	Earthquake – evidenced by body of woman crushed in a doorway by falling stone	LH IIIB1 (1300-1225 BCE)
Palace*	Earthquake likely	End LH IIIB2/beginning LH IIIC Early (1225-1190 BCE)

From the above chart, based on physical evidence of infrastructural dilapidation, earthquakes appear as the overwhelming, if not sole, cause of the destruction levels at Mycenae. Recognizing earthquake destruction in architecture, though, is quite subjective, with the damage results appearing almost identical to those of a city destroyed by human action, i.e. warfare.[93] Identifying elements would be "collapsed, patched, or reinforced walls; crushed skeletons or bodies found lying under fallen debris; toppled columns lying parallel to one another; skipped keystones in archways and doorways; and walls leaning at impossible angles or offset from their original position."[94] With the abundance of this type of destruction evidence throughout the Aegean, some scholars have hypothesized that an "earthquake storm" is responsible for the destruction levels and ensuing collapse of socio-political structures

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[93] Cline 2014, 140.
[94] Cline 2014, 140.

throughout the region.[95] While it has been proven by archaeoseismologists that the Aegean did experience a series of earthquakes from about 1225 to 1175, the destruction levels appear both before and after these dates.[96] Additionally, if this series of earthquakes were the main reason behind the palatial collapse, then it would be logical to assume that they were enough to cause a breakdown- or at least a significant break- in non-palatial areas as well, such as Achaea, or even Italy. This, though, is not the case. Therefore, while earthquakes certainly could be a contributing factor to the collapse of Mycenaean prominence in the region, it was not the sole cause, nor even the most detrimental.

Other collapse factors that have been identified are climate change and the resulting droughts and famines.[97] In this theory, the climate change and introduction of harsh living conditions, lack of resources, and inability to cultivate crops is what drove the Sea Peoples and others into mass migrations, uprooting other settlements along the way, sometimes even violently. Additionally, drought and famine would have explained the population decrease that is noted at the end of the Bronze Age.[98] However, like with the earthquake storm scenario, these explanations are partial and would not explain an entire system of palaces crashing down.

Moving on to non-environmental causes, internal rebellion, possible invaders, and a turn towards private mercantilism have all been suggested.[99] In both the internal rebellion and invaders theory, the aforementioned droughts or famines would have likely been the driving force behind these tension-filled circumstances. It is the decentralization of the economy and the turn towards private mercantilism, though, that I find most compelling. In looking at the palatial systems in place in the Late Bronze Age, with economic, agricultural, and seemingly social control, and comparing it with the Iron Age city state organization, a fundamental shift in economic pursuits had to have taken place. The example of "private economy" may have been showcased by migratory peoples, Sea Peoples or others, with non-palatial entities being able to link up in the trade system without being subverted to palace control.[100] The idea of private enterprise would certainly be appealing to places like Achaea, where they could rather easily continue and strengthen their trade relationship with southeastern Italy.

With all this said, it is overly simplistic to attempt to attribute the Bronze Age collapse to a singular cause. While the repercussions were far flung, and the synchronization of palatial collapse is compelling, it is likely a combination of all the above mentioned factors that led to the destruction and abandonment of palatial centers throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and led to the opportunity of social, political, and economic restructuring.

The period following the collapse, the 'Dark Ages' as it has been called, was thought to be characterized by an absence of central administration and their architectural embodiments (like palaces), low-level social organization, a lack of inter-regional or international relations, and an unlearning or complete absence of a writing system.[101] Areas of society, politics, and economy opened up to a sort of vacuum that allowed for polities, such as Achaea, to infiltrate and begin developing the newly 'free' system

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[95] Cline 2014, 141.
[96] Cline 2014, 141.
[97] Diamond 2005, 11.
[98] Cline 2014, 143.
[99] Middleton 2007, 41.
[100] Artzy 1998; Cline 2014, 143; Kilian 1990, 467; Sherratt 1998, 294.
[101] Middleton 2007, 31.

further. Their own economic interests and socio-political contacts were already independent of the palaces, as we have seen in the above section, but in the postpalatial period did not have the looming presence of the central Mycenaean administration.

Teichos Dymaion

Like the political structures present before the collapse, the evidence for 'crisis' in Achaea is markedly different than that in the Mycenaean palatial system. Unsurprisingly, the region of Achaea did not exhibit contractions and crisis-type elements to the extent that the palaces did; however, certain areas did witness some level of contemporary destruction, signaling unrest was present in the area to at least a small extent.

Teichos Dymaion, a rather large and fortified settlement, produced a destruction level at the end of the LH IIIB, and again at the close of LH IIIC, with a period of reoccupation between.[102] This destruction seems isolated within the broader Achaean area, so the elements leading to the destruction would likely be something particular to the settlement itself. The final destruction of the LH IIIC period was caused by fire, but whether or not that fire was a result of a violent attack or a random incident is yet to be determined.[103] Habitation is attested on the basis of domestic function Final Mycenaean (Phase 6a) pottery, and well into the Protogeometric period.[104]

The pattern of destruction and reoccupation combined with the localized destroying force of fire suggests that the situation at Teichos Dymaion was one of internal conflict as opposed to an outside aggressor. Since Teichos Dymaion was an important node in the network connecting the Peloponnese to the west, and interacted with the Mycenaean palaces, there is the possibility that when instability began in the palatial system, Teichos Dymaion experienced a similar unrest on the basis of their economic connections alone. Surrounding regions may have been interested in controlling the settlement area in order to take the lead on regulating trade with Italy, or with the extraction of direct Mycenaean interests at the site internal factions may have been in tension with one another. Either way, Teichos Dymaion suffered a contemporary destruction with the Mycenean palaces, though on a much lesser scale and isolated within the region of Achaea. This individual event is certainly not enough to justify a 'crisis,' nor was it enough of a disruption that the region of Achaea suffered as a result.

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE COLLAPSE

In light of destruction evidence, or lack thereof, in the western Peloponnese, the idea that the collapse of the LH IIIB period was brought on by natural disasters such as earthquake storms or drought becomes problematic. Such occurrences would have undoubtedly spelled out widespread destruction across the Peloponnese, and perhaps even into Italy. As we know this is not the case, the root causes of the crisis have to deal with specific economic and political infrastructure shared by entities of the Mycenaean palatial system, Egypt, and the Near East.[105] These institutions shared similar systems of surplus storage, agricultural control, and a system of exchange centered on the interaction between "great kings," and it is in the institutionally controlled sectors that a 'crisis' is interpreted.[106] Internal unrest, competition

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[102] Moschos 2009, 242.
[103] Moschos 2009, 242; Mastrokostas 1967, 121.
[104] Moschos 2009, 242; Kolonas 2006, 219 -221.
[105] Eder and Jung 2005, 485.
[106] Eder and Jung 2005, 485.

between rulers, an agricultural shortage (perhaps brought on by drought), and resulting famine to those who depended on redistribution of goods by the palaces, all in conjunction with one another, seem to be the likely 'causes' of the palatial disintegration.

The area of the western Peloponnese and Italy did not have these systems in place, nor were they interacting on such a large scale with other polities. While this type of social, political, and economic existence allowed these peripheral regions of the palatial system to fly under the radar during the height of Mycenaean influence in the region, it also meant they were not susceptible to the breakdown of the palatial hegemony.[107] Thus, in the period immediately following the breakdown of the palatial system, these areas played an important role in filling the vacuum left by the palaces in terms of economic production, political development, and international relations. They were able to continue functioning as they were before, and actually increase their social complexity and economic interests.

IV. LH IIIC Achaea and Final Bronze Age Italy: prosperity and productivity in the aftermath of palatial disintegration

As the palatial systems of the eastern Mediterranean disappeared and the trade systems contracted, a power vacuum formed in which political entities that still maintained their autonomy and ability to participate in trade quickly filled. These areas were centered in the western Peloponnese and Italy, who had already established contact with the wider Mediterranean and were participating in long distance and regional trade for centuries before the palatial collapse. By looking at the relationship between Italy and Achaea during the LH IIIC period, including the burial practices, goods exchanged, technology of production, and political organization, we are able to delineate the ways in which social complexity drastically increased in post-palatial polities and how they directly benefitted from a lack of palatial control. This section aims to directly discount the notion of a post-palatial 'Dark Age' throughout the Aegean and Mediterranean, only to be rectified with the emergence of city-states in the 8th and 7th centuries BCE.[108]

INTERACTION AND TRADE

The nature of the Italy – Achaea relationship in LH IIIC centers around an intensification, a "series of developments within a single process" without a clear break over the period of palatial instability.[109] New Aegean trade routes that formed in the aftermath of the palatial absence connected places like Cyprus, Achaea, and Elis to the formerly peripheral central Mediterranean Italian peninsula.[110] What made this possible, at its root, was the comparable systems of political organization shared between Italy and Achaea, specifically.

In Italy, a complex political framework took on a different shape and structure than that of *wanax* led palatial systems. There was no equivalent to a *wanax* in local Italian politics, nor was there a system of redistribution, surplus storage, or mass production of goods.[111] This meant that during the palatial

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[107] Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 362.
[108] Betelli 2012, 216; Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 362.
[109] Betelli 2012, 216.
[110] Betelli 2012, 216.
[111] Eder and Jung 2005, 485.

period, Italy was excluded from meaningful contact with palaces in the eastern Mediterranean, requiring their goods to travel to intermediary points like Achaea first, which were then to be transferred to palatial centers through Mycenaean management. The notion that Italy was excluded from the majority of lucrative trade in the Mediterranean is supported by the fact that wealthy items from the Aegean network such as gold jewelry and semi-precious stones are all but absent in contemporary Italian sites.[112] Mycenaean pottery is present, but only at a select few ports and in small quantities when compared to ports of the eastern Mediterranean.[113] The 12th and 11th century rulership of Italy would have relied on some amount of stratification, yet not to the point where "king" would be applied in order to interact even on a very basic level with incoming Mycenaean traders. The comparative simplicity of social organization in the shadow of the palaces, though, does not mean that Italy was lacking in complexity, just that it was not compatible for seamless integration with palatial procedures.[114] The pre-collapse engagement between Italy and Greece appeared to function on a "low-level" status, allowing a great deal of room for another trading entity (the Achaeans) to come in and develop an intensified relationship more mutually beneficial than the one established prior.[115]

In LH IIIC Achaea, the status of rulership and controlling elites echoed that of Italy in that there was no comparable entity to a Mycenaean *wanax.* There was an elite class that took charge of control and organization, but systems of centrally organized industries like agriculture did not exist.[116] After the collapse of the palaces the elite group, even in Achaea, shrunk and reorganized, but still maintained its typical appearance.[117] This is important to note because this same class interacting with Italy before the palatial collapse is the same one intensifying interactions in the LH IIIC period on. In Teichos Dymaion, specifically, the excavation of a scepter has led to the interpretation that a king existed and was charged with the continuation and prosperity of socio-economic relationships into the LH IIIC period.[118] However, since there is a notable lack of monumental tholoi tombs and absence of any remotely palatial buildings in the area, any areas such that appear to be a center of wealth or typical control, such as an acropolis, would have likely been used to manage trade routes.[119] This is fitting with the fact that the post-palatial economy was dominated by small-scale trade with either private individuals and small groups controlling the connections between nodes of the network.[120] Thus, post-palatial, LH IIIC Achaea appears to be organized on the basis of private economic enterprise in a way that did not require large, state run institutions or introductions that the palatial system did. Settlements could support trade, welcome envoys, and carry out their own economic interests successfully with neighboring Italy as their political framework was quite similar.

With these two areas sharing such similar systems of political control and social stratification, which would not have been affected by an institutional breakdown of palatial *wanax* states, it comes as no surprise that they would seize the opportunity to forge a new status quo of trade and interaction. It was

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[112] Eder and Jung 2005, 485.
[113] Eder and Jung 2005, 485.
[114] Arena 2015, 1.
[115] Eder and Jung 2005, 486.
[116] Foxhall 1995, 244 – 247.
[117] Eder 2006, 570-572.
[118] Desborough 1972, 92; Arena 2015, 11.
[119] Arena 2015, 11.
[120] Eder and Jung 2005, 486.

the absence of central administration and order that signaled the collapse of the palaces, not the absence of a *wanax*. In Italy and Achaea, non-palatial systems allowed them to continue interacting with one another, regardless of what type of ruler was installed at the helm.[121] These minimally stratified polities of Italy and Achaea would have been able to recognize and interact on hierarchical terms, giving a bottom-up sense of development throughout the LH IIIC period and into the EIA. While people from the Aegean were traveling west now to look for raw materials and explore new networks for trade and exchange, people from Italy also exploited these new bilateral networks. Handmade Burnished Ware (a type of local Italian pottery) found in LH IIIC stratigraphy from Lefkandi, Tiryns, and Khania, as well as Italian grey ware cups in the early reoccupation phase at Dimini suggest that there was a movement of people, goods, and technology to the Aegean, a situation that we did not see evidence of before the collapse of the palaces.[122]

NEW NETWORKS

Where palatial societies interacted with one another on the basis of gift exchange first, product and technology later, Italy and Achaea developed a system of trade where goods, technology, and people flowed across the network without a specific center cultivating mass amounts of wealth. Main nodes on the 12th and 11th centuries in Italy are largely focused on the southeastern portion of the Italian peninsula in the Apulia region at Scoglio del Tonno and Roca Vecchia, with the western Peloponnese being their economic counterpart, unsurprisingly.[123] Locally produced Mycenaean pottery is found in northern Apulia in increasing amounts, as well as material of eastern origin, demonstrating that Aegean people and/or technology was transferred concretely up the Italian peninsula, securing that as an arm in the new LH IIIC trade and exchange network.[124]

Another newly incorporated leg into the Mediterranean network centers on the acquisition of raw materials, such as amber and tin, from continental Europe.[125] Surviving polities in the eastern Mediterranean and areas in the Peloponnese were able to reach north eastern Italy directly from the 12th century on. This is indicated by Naue IIC-type swords present in Achaea and warrior burials, as well as figure-of-eight fibulae, both of which are minimally evidenced in contemporary Apulia, leaving to reason a direct route to the north up the Adriatic Sea and not relying on intermediary sites in Apulia to carry out trade and acquisition.[126] Metal artefacts, large pithoi of olive oil, and Achaean produced pottery were all key elements in short and long-distance trade of the LH IIIC period.

In light of the ability to reach north-eastern Italy directly after 1200 BCE, then, brings into question what role Apulia played in this new network. Primarily, the settlements of Apulia had acted as intermediaries between Aegean and Mediterranean interests and local trade products, amassing bronze and gold wealth at places like Roca Vecchia.[127] With the ability to expand the direct network north and west, though, without the traditional interference of Apulia, Aegean imports experienced a further reach and

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[121] Muhly 2003, 24.
[122] Eder and Jung 2005, 487.
[123] Cazzella and Recchia 2009, 36.
[124] Cazzella and Recchia 2009, 36.
[125] Cazzella and Recchia 2009, 37.
[126] Cazzella 2009, 161.
[127] Cazzella 2009, 162; Eder and Jung 2005, 490.

Apulia itself intensified and maintained contacts both locally and abroad. At the same time, Ionian islands like Cephalonia off the western coast of the Peloponnese demonstrated a high amount of wealth in terms of imported amber beads and pottery, suggesting that the islands started to replace Apulia as the mediating point of trade.[128] However, there is not a disruption or slack in Apulia's wealth itself, indicating that there was a general increase in wealth and prosperity in the central Mediterranean across the board.
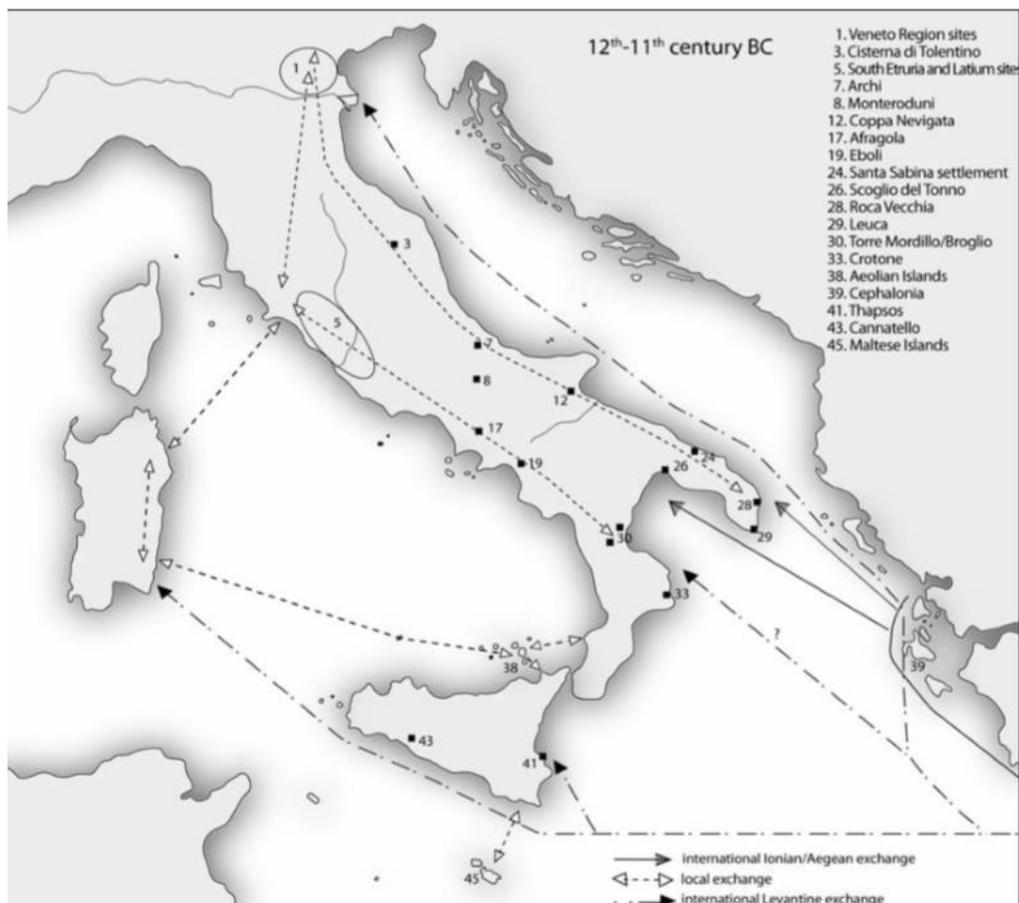

Figure 5: Potential directionality of exchange routes in the 12th and 11th centuries BCE. Cazzella and Recchia 2009, 37.

At this point, it is prudent to harken back to the potential causes of the palatial collapse. It has been proposed that mass migration and potentially invading seafarers were part of the reason that the palaces of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean crumbled.[129] However, the trade routes that were forged and intensified in the central Mediterranean, with prominent actors from the Aegean, Cyprus, and even the Levantine coast proves that trade was still able to continue on a robust and long-distance scale. Further, while Italy experienced a large influx of imported goods from a wider range of sources, exported Italian goods were mainly raw materials. If there had truly been an invasion of violent seafarers, this robust network that still ensured an active network of polities throughout the Mediterranean would 1.) not have been able to exist since it was largely run by small-scale merchant operation, and 2.) we wouldn't see this autonomous level of activity on the part of Italian regions and

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[128] Cazzella 2009, 162-163.
[129] Cline 2014, 148.

Apulian or Cephalonian intermediaries. The spirit of international trade did not collapse then, it just took on a new form that enabled a wider involvement of smaller polities that had been shut out prior.

TECHNOLOGY, GOODS, AND MATERIALS

Having established a robust, local and long-distance trading network in the LH IIIC period, we now come to analyzing and determining how to weigh the strength of these economic, social, and political relationships. This is best done through three categories of material: ceramic assemblages, bronze items, and burial customs, including tomb style and burial goods themselves.

Ceramic assemblages of the LH IIIC period in Italy and in Achaea grant us the ability to determine how integrated each respective cultural group was within each other and what kind of technology and styles were being exchanged within the aforementioned networks. Italian ceramics, like Handmade Burnished Ware, or *impasto*, Aegean style pottery, including Achaean style pottery (Late Mature) and Mycenaean and Submycenaean vessels, hybrid vessels, and local production and bilateral imports make up the ceramic data set.[130] Figure 6 displays the distribution of Italian and Mycenaean pottery, which we can relate to Achaean or western Peloponnesian interaction immediately following the fall of the palaces. From this image, we are able to see that the exchange of pottery, or the technology used to produce them locally, was bilateral between Italy and the Aegean.
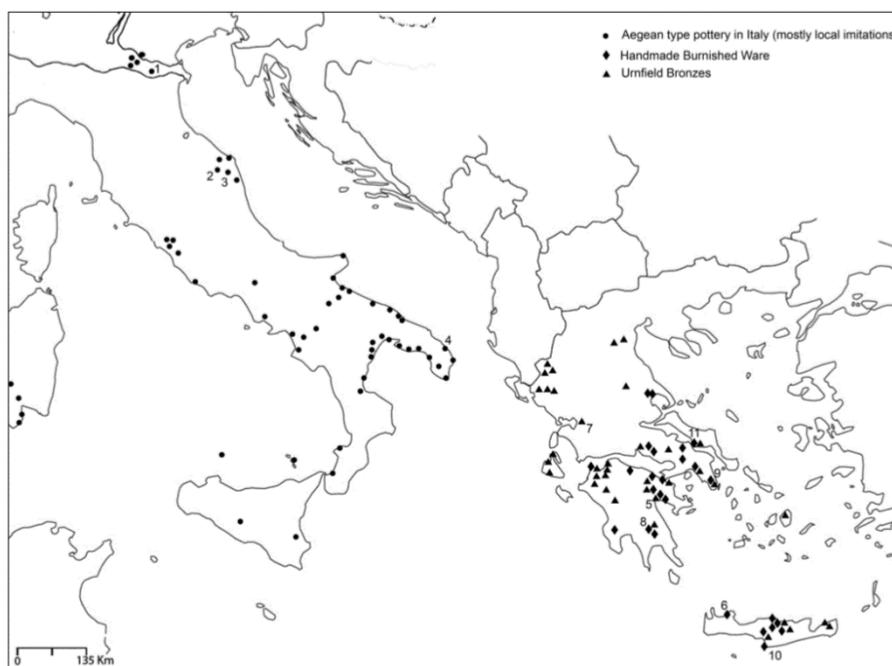

Figure 6: Findspots of Aegean type pottery, Handmade Burnished Ware. and Urnfield Bronzes in the LH IIIB-C periods. Iacono 2012, 64.

Handmade burnished ware and grey burnished ware ceramics were perhaps the most dominant ceramics to be extracted from Italy and found in mainland Greece, Crete, Cyprus, and the Levantine

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[130] Moschos 2009, 238; Iacono 2012, 63.

coast.[131] Handmade Burnished Ware (HBW) differs from the Mycenaean wheel-made pottery in that chronologically speaking there is little development in shape and style. The main HBW shapes were large jars, carinated bowls and cups and the decorative techniques center on finger-impressed, plain, or plastic cordon surface additions.[132] HBW originally is found in the LH IIIB2 period but expands geographically in the LH IIIC period, with multiple findspots in Achaea. The increased distribution of Handmade Burnished Ware, as simple and as utilitarian as it seems, implies three different key points to recognize during the LH IIIC/Postpalatial/Final Bronze Age period: 1.) There was an economic opening for these types of rather simple ceramics in mainland Greece immediately following the palatial collapse; 2.) Italian craftsmen and workshops were able to fulfill this need in a rather short amount of time, speaking to the availability of resources and manpower present in Italy in the LH IIIC period; and 3.) that local Italian polities had the ability to engage in profitable trade as far away as Cyprus. It is unlikely, with the manner of which Mycenaean administration controlled production, consumption of goods, and trade, that this type of Italian reach could have existed under Mycenaean influence. Again, engagement required comparable socio-political frameworks that simply did not exist during the palatial period.

At the same time that HBW is being distributed throughout Greece, Aegean type pottery in the Central Mediterranean also increased its distribution, however not as imports but as local imitations.[133] In tying the growth of economic prosperity in Italy and the western Peloponnese to the actual absence of Mycenaean palatial influence, the increase in locally produced and managed ceramic material speaks to the ability of local Italian production centers to identify and fulfill supply and demand of certain products. With the absence of Mycenaean palaces sending ceramics for import, Italian sites had to develop a way to maintain the interest in the products as well as capitalize on their economic potential. Of course, the locally produced Mycenaean style wares could be attributed to displaced Mycenaean craftsmen after the palaces disintegrated as opposed to Italian craftsman learning the technology and trade to produce the products themselves, but this distinction is hard to prove either way and rather inconsequential in the end.

Raw metals and metal products were also in high demand in the LH IIIC period, with items such as fibulae, knives, daggers, and swords comprising a "koine metallurgica," according to Eder and Jung.[134] More specifically, the Naue II type swords can be used as a class of item to understand cultural and technological transfers in the 12th and 11th centuries between Italy and the Peloponnese. The Naue II type swords are characterized by a fishtailed or flanged hilt with a central tongue, a thick cross section, parallel-sided cutting edges, and who's primary function was "cut-and-thrust."[135] Naue II swords were able to thrust and slash, hitting the enemy from above- a combat style completely new to the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean who's swords were only designed to thrust.[136] This type of sword, which likely originated in the Eastern Alps and moved eastward down through Italy and then into the Aegean,

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[131] Betelli 2012, 216-218; Iacono 2012, 63.
[132] Iacono 2012, 63.
[133] Blake 2008, 5; Iacono 2012, 66.
[134] Eder and Jung 2005, 487.
[135] Suchowska-Duke 2015, 258.
[136] Jung 2009, 72.

was highly resistant to damage during use, like bending.[137] The appearance of Naue II swords in the archaeological record is traced to the LH IIIB period, and became the most prominent sword in the Aegean by the LH IIIC period.[138] The durability of the Naue II swords prompted them to replace the Aegean sword types F and G, and thus must have proved more useful and reliable directly during the period that the palaces would be collapsing.[139]

The Naue II type sword is also closely related to the LH IIIC phenomenon of 'warrior prince' burials in Achaea, where other weaponry as well as metal vessels, dress fasteners, and jewelry are found, suggesting a comparatively high level of wealth and the need to communicate social hierarchy and stratification.[140] One such example comes from the Klauss Warrior 2 burial in Achaea, at the southeastern edge of Patras. This burial is dated to Phase 3 (LH IIIC Developed to LH IIIC Advanced) of the cemetery and is one of 10 assigned to this time period. The chamber tomb enclosed a ~30 year old, 1.77m tall male, who was surrounded by eight stirrup jars encircling his head and one (miniature) placed on his chest, three small amphorae, four ivory robe fastening pins, a Naue II type sword placed behind his back, a bronze spear, a bronze knife, and a bronze pair of tweezers, all together no doubt presenting a significant warrior burial.[141]

The ceramic objects placed within the burial are quite standard, but the metal objects tell a more complex story than simply 'local warrior.' The bronze knife, for instance, with its concave and thin blade with a triangular section, does not coincide with any known Mycenaean type nor Aegean type in general, but it does have comparanda with Peroni's Peschiera type of knife that comes from northern Italy and central Europe.[142] Thus, this bronze knife is likely an Italian import, deposited as a utilized prestige item demonstrating access to Italian markets. Further, the deposit of a Naue II type sword which did not originate in Achaea, represents a larger spread of military technology to the Aegean from the central and northern Mediterranean, in this case directly from Italy.[143] Warrior burials where swords of foreign origin are found suggest that these weapons were not actively used in combat, but rather the products of gift exchange between Italian and Achaean societies, furthering the notion that the absence of Mycenaean palatial control directly contributed to the ability of non-palatial centers like Italy and Achaea to forge increasingly complex and productive relationships.[144]

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[137] Suchowska-Ducke 2015, 258.
[138] Eder and Jung 2005, 487; Jung and Mehofer 2013, 176.
[139] Eder and Jung 2005, 487.
[140] Suchowska-Ducke 2015, 264; Paschalidis and McGeorge 2009, 81.
[141] Paschalidis and McGeorge 2009, 89-93.
[142] Paschalidis and McGeorge 2009, 92.
[143] Jung 2009, 72.
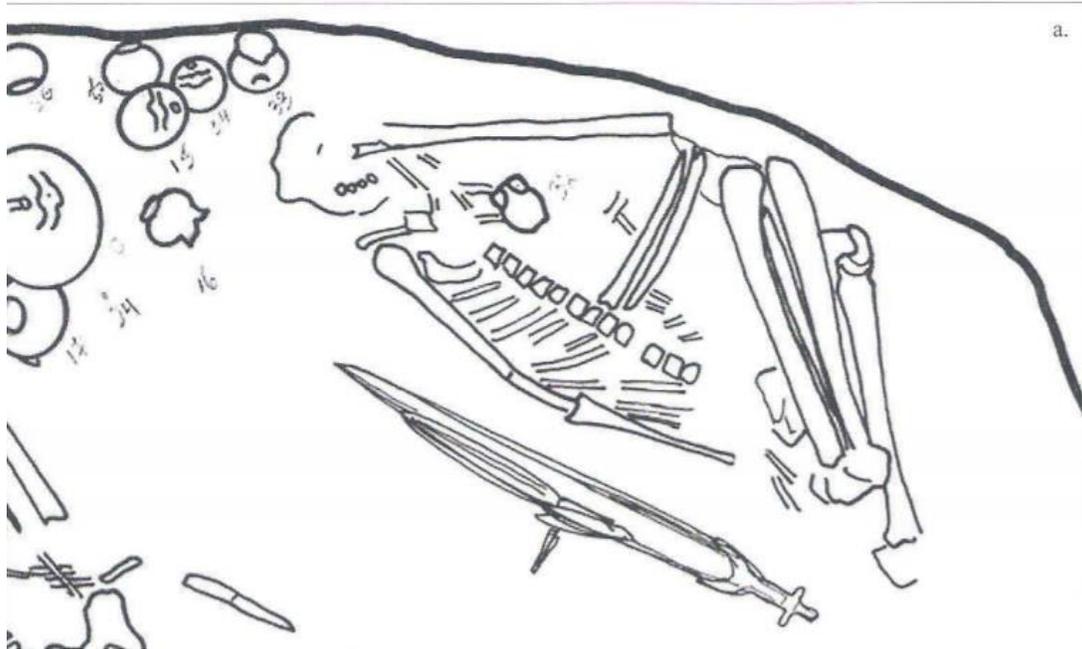[144] Jung and Mehofer 2013, 185.

Figure 7: Schematic of the Klauss Warrior 2 burial. Illustrated in the upper left are the stirrup jars and amphorae, with one placed over the chest, while the Naue II sword and bronze items are shown behind the skeleton's back. Paschalidis and McGeorge 2009.

BURIAL CUSTOMS

In the LH IIIC period, Mycenaean mortuary practices see minimal change- the process of pits and cists with inhumed deceased remains the norm. [145] However, during the postpalatial and Submycenaean period, two local phenomena appear in the record: a dramatic increase in warrior burials, and a presence, albeit small, of cremation. [146] As mortuary customs represent a conscious communication of identity, both in terms of the group and the individual, an adoption of imported customs for burials indicates a willingness and openness by the adopting part to integrate into new customs and practices, forging a new identity that is distinctly separate from that of prior generations.[147] Additionally, a regional concentration of warrior or weapon burials suggests that there was a need to demonstrate a region's ability to protect itself. I'll first present the evidence and concentration of warrior burials as it represents a paradigm shift in Achaean society, after which I will discuss the importance of an Achaean adoption of cremation practices as it relates to Italian relationships, even on a small scale.

One of the more poignant aspects of the warrior burial phenomena is that their distribution is centered in regions that were never palatial to begin with.[148] Warrior burials first appear in the LH IIIB Final or LH IIIC Early period, with only one example coming from Tomb 21 from Langada, and increase in frequency throughout the LH IIIC Middle and IIIC Late phases.[149] In Achaea, warrior burials are found at Patra-

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[145] Moschos 2019, 248.
[146] Ruppenstein 2013, 185.
[147] Feuer 2011, 115.
[148] Middleton 2007, 101.
[149] Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 173; Jung 2009, 73.

Klauss, Krini, Monodhenri-Hagios Konstantinos, Kallithea-Spenzes, Kallithea-Langanidia, Lousika-Spaliareika, Kangadi, Portes, Nikoleika, and Palaiokastro. Inhumation remained the consistent form, with a few cremations evidenced.[150] Chamber tombs dominated with multiple inhumations occurring in a single chamber. In cases where warrior burials are present with other bodies, such as at Krini, the family or clan of the deceased warrior were intentionally highlighting their close relationship with the warrior, negotiating their own social and political status to the rest of the community.[151]

Since the style of tomb or method of inhumation did not communicate that the deceased was a warrior, it is on the basis of grave goods that we derive the warrior interpretation. Typical deposits were Naue II type swords, spearheads, knives, bronze greaves, and shields.[152] Weaponry deposits became richer and more abundant throughout the LH IIIC period, with the apex occurring in the LH IIIC Advanced or IIIC Late period.[153]

One specific tomb grouping at Spaliareika near Lousika in Achaea provides us with a series of warrior burials demonstrating the advancement over the LH IIIC period as a whole, and thus representing the corresponding increase in social complexity occurring in Achaea. The tomb itself was 3 meters in height, an imitated vault roof, and carved walls.[154] The first burial of this tomb, dated to the LH IIIC Early period and located at the southern wall, was a cremation in a kalathos and accompanied by a long knife, a normal knife, a razor, a pair of tweezers, two whetstones, and six vases.[155] This individual would have undoubtedly been an elite, but it's unclear if he was a 'warrior' based on the lack of sword or spear. The second warrior burial in this tomb was inhumed, dated to LH IIIC Middle and Late, and was located in the northwestern corner. Deposits accompanying the body included a Naue II sword, a long knife, a small knife, two spearheads, and nine vases. No doubt this was a warrior or an individual intensely tied to military activity in the area. The combination of the Naue II type sword, which I have already established reached the Aegean as a foreign imported style from Italy and central Europe, and the typically Achaean bird-vase, this specific warrior burial produces evidence of intimate relationships between Achaea and Italy. The third burial, dating to the LH IIIC Advanced or IIIC Late period, was a large and oblong pit with an empty second pit located beneath it covered with stone plaques. On top of the plaques was first a layer of burnt incense and then the deposit of a Naue II type sword, a spearhead, a spear-butt spike, a knife, a circular shield boss, and a stirrup jar.[156] Not only did this final burial contain the most impressive deposit of weaponry, but it also was physically distinct from the other burials in the tomb that shared a tomb floor. Clearly the final 'warrior' in this burial group achieved a social position notably higher than his predecessors and the community or family wanted to both commemorate his ties to the previous warriors, but also acknowledge his advanced status amongst them.

Examples of burial cremation in Achaea, while markedly rarer, still symbolize a significant shift in mortuary customs of the LH IIIC period onwards. Inspiration for cremation in the Aegean can be traced to either Asia Minor or Italy. Since Achaea did not have significant contacts with Asia Minor in the LH IIIC

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[150] Moschos 2019, 249; Middleton 2007, 103.
[151] Papazoglou-Manioudaki 1994, 174.
[152] Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 152.
[153] Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 158.
[154] Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 158.
[155] Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 158.
[156] Deger-Jalkotzy 2006, 158.

period or prior, and cremation was the main burial type in Italy in the 12th century, the cremations evidenced are almost definitively derived from social and political contacts with Italy.[157] It is notable that the practice of cremation did *not* come from Anatolia, demonstrating the directionality, intensity, and socio-political implications of postpalatial contacts with Italy. Additionally, the presence of Naue II type swords, which are based directly of Italian prototypes, correlate to the areas producing the most cremation burials and lacking any discernible connection to Asia Minor.[158]

In contemporary Recent and Final Bronze Age Italy, cremation in urnfield cemeteries was dominant, but the process of grave good deposition differed. Bulky items that would normally accompany warrior burials in Achaean customs were usually deposited in a hoard as opposed to within the urn itself.[159]. Communicating social hierarchy and consumable wealth does not appear to be a part of the mortuary ritual in Italy, which means the change in the record of mortuary practice in Achaea to include cremation and the prominence of Naue II type swords doe not correlate to a physical presence of Italian migrants, but an adoption of social practices. However, warrior burials that are compatible to those in Achaea do exist, producing the same category of grave goods that was uniquely curated in Achaea.[160]

Looking at the burial custom and goods exchanged across this new, robust LH IIIC social and economic network is particularly interesting because it demonstrates a bilateral, multi-use road of exchange that did not exist during the palatial period. First, contacts between Achaea and Italy are established on the basis of comparable political institutions. Second, technology, weaponry, and social practices like cremation is transferred from Italy to Achaea, mainly non-palatial centers. Third, these imports, both physical and ideological, are consumed into the Achaean ideology and integrated into the mortuary practices of the area, creating a unique class of burials boasting both local and foreign items. Fourth, these 'hybrid' burials are again exchanged back to Italy along the network and subsumed into the Italian mortuary record, establishing an intimate connection between Italy and Achaea that could not have existed if the palaces had been present to control or influence this network of physical and ideological exchange.

V. Conclusions

Despite the preceding disintegration of Mediterranean palatial constructs, the LH IIIC period in Achaea and Italy was a time of increased social complexity, prosperous production, and lucrative international trade and contact. The unbroken chain of activity in these regions can be attributed to their lack of participation in the aforesaid palatial institutions, and their already established utilization of small-scale, independent merchant practices. By looking comparatively at the situation in Achaea, Italy, and Mycenaean Greece in general before the Bronze Age collapse, we are able to deduce that the palaces did not control or influence as much of the Aegean world, or even the Mediterranean world, as was once thought. These palaces were indeed powerful and were a part of a very large network of trade between other palatial centers in the eastern Mediterranean, but they did not dominate to the point where other political systems, like the minimally stratified local polities in Achaea and Italy, could not coexist. As a result, Achaea and Italy were able to create their own independent socio-cultural existence that would not have been negatively impacted in the absence of palatial centers. This is confirmed by

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[157] Ruppenstein 2013, 187.
[158] Ruppenstein 2013, 188.
[159] Eder and Jung 2005, 490.
[160] Eder and Jung 2005, 491.

the succeeding century or so of palatial collapse, where anything from earthquakes to invaders to internal rebellion has been cited as the reason behind the massive infrastructural and ideological contraction and disappearance of Bronze Age palaces. If the cause of the collapse had in fact been something so unbiased like an earthquake storm, then the region of Achaea would have suffered a great deal more damage than just a singular site witnessing destruction. The cause, then, is likely a combination of factors mainly ushered in by the fragility of the palatial political and economic systems. Achaean and Italian socio-political frameworks persisted throughout the Late Bronze Age, uninterrupted, and actually increasing in complexity after the palaces disappeared.

Because of this, the prosperity and intensification of economic, political, and social relationships between Achaea and Italy is directly tied to and dependent upon the collapse of the palaces. In the absence of palaces, a socio-political vacuum formed, opening up trade routes, resource procurement, and inspiring a reorganization of the elite class, likely rooted in the principals of warrior/military communities. The LH III A/B Achaean political organization as autonomous was codified in the LH IIIC period and can be seen as predecessors to the Iron Age city states in the Aegean. From the LH IIIC period on in Achaea and Italy, there is no significant and far-flung break in social development into what will become the Iron Age city states, a fact that is entirely unique in the Mediterranean in this time period.

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