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The Collapse of the Mycenaean Economy

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development is important, as are regional surveys to detect this. There does not seem to have been social ranking until the end of the period, late MH III/LH I. More emphasis seems to have been placed on mortuary architecture and conspicuous consumption in grave gifts than on settlements. These trends seem to have been widespread, encompassing at least one island settlement, Ayia Irini on Kea, and mainland Greece, Boeotia. Two thoughts come to mind in general, as various authors make clear: lack of evidence is not the same as evidence of lack and simple appearances do not mean simple people.

A few comments follow. In their excellent introduction, the editors give four possible factors leading to change – external influence, agricultural surplus, physical environment and interaction with conspicuous consumption – saying further that it is most likely that there was not one single factor which caused the changes noted, but rather a multiplicity of factors. Regarding the physical environment, it would have been useful and perhaps germane to include a chapter discussing current climate work. (I remember learning about a supposed very dry, colder period around the end of the third millennium across most of northern Europe and Asia, causing migration, depopulation and collapse – is this still a theory?) Furthermore, in reference to the calls for unifying terminologies for ceramics and chronological periods in the first two chapters: whilst such unification is certainly needed, how to make people use them, how to ‘update’ all previous publications and how, in the case of pottery, to correct for new variables or subdivisions which appear in the archaeological material? A further comment: could one underlying cause of change have been a shift in religious thinking after the ‘crisis’, making death and the afterlife more important perhaps than living? Such a shift could have created in part the ‘new order’ seen in EH III/MH societies. Lastly, there remains something of a chicken-and-egg conundrum regarding cause and effect: emphasis is still on ‘what’ rather than on ‘why’, but, to be sure, it is not easy to discuss human behaviour, especially that which occurred 3,000–4,000 years ago.

Let me conclude by saying that, in my opinion, this volume is an excellent tool in all manner of ways for updating one’s knowledge and presents important, ongoing discussions in a palatable and pedagogical way.

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MURRAY (C.S.) **The Collapse of the Mycenaean Economy: Imports, Trade, and Institutions 1300–700 BCE.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 366. £90. 9781107186378.

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This book is a historical study, based on textual and archaeological evidence, geographically focused on Greece, with an occasional broadening of spatial scope to the wider Mediterranean. The goal of the book (based partly on Murray’s 2013 PhD thesis) is to address how and why the exchange economy of the Greek world changed in scale and structure between the Late Helladic (LH) IIIB period and the Early Iron Age (EIA). This is done by presenting a synthesis of existing (archaeological) evidence for long-distance trade, and assessing if this evidence can be relied upon. Evidence scrutinized and evaluated in the separate chapters includes textual evidence, imported and exported items (i.e. number, distribution, context, material) and data on demography and the domestic economy. The whole book constitutes a well-written and well-constructed argument. At the beginning of each chapter, problems and limitations regarding the data at hand are elaborately discussed. Notwithstanding these difficulties, Murray tries to squeeze out as many patterns as possible from these different bodies of data and lines these all up. As she writes: ‘According to a law of cumulative credibility (“if evidence from all approaches converges on a common viewpoint, this creates a strong argument for approximation to reality”), if all of the evidence that we can muster shows a similar pattern as the imports do, we will have a better case for scalar change in economic systems over time’ (160–61).

In the introductory chapter Murray reviews the ways in which archaeologists have interpreted the meaning of import and export distributions, and argues that, although models may be helpful in understanding trade and interaction mechanisms, the archaeological evidence at hand is not good enough (yet) to feed into such models. Chapter 1 reviews textual sources that are set aside by Murray as deeply unhelpful in her project. A minimalist comparison of some aspects of trade in the texts are limited to agency, mechanisms and magnitude, while the type of exchanged materials, the function of gift exchange and the ideology of exchange cannot be compared. Chapter 2 discusses a history of economic interaction and examines the most direct evidence for early Greek long-distance

exchange from quantitative and qualitative points of view. A consistent pattern emerges in which import numbers drop off after the end of the LH IIIB period and only recover again in the Geometric. Diachronic changes are visible as well in the function and material of imports. However, in chapter 3, the quantitative patterns reconstructed in the preceding chapter are challenged. Murray concludes that the evidence is so problematic and prone to all kinds of distortions that we need to seek additional evidence to be sure that the reconstructed pattern is reliable. She tests in chapter 4 the notion that the long-distance trade in commodities suffered a greater decline after the Mycenaean collapse than did trade in small personal objects. Additionally, she summarizes the evidence of Greek exports around the Mediterranean, which shows a similar pattern of decline after the Mycenaean collapse and recovery in the ninth and eighth centuries. In chapter 5, Murray argues that demographic change, rather than changes or interruptions of trade routes, explains the quantitative changes outlined in the preceding chapters. She argues that a population decline of about 40–60% is likely between the late 13th and late 11th century, with steady growth after that. In chapter 6, all the evidence is pulled together. In the conclusions, several implications of Murray's study are highlighted; with respect to the Late Bronze Age, Murray argues that the distribution and context of the import evidence do not support the idea that Mycenaean elites used imported exotica to create and express social differences or that they controlled or depended on long-distance exchange. Indeed, the consistent affiliation of imported exotica with ritual contexts suggests that spiritual reasons, rather than political or economic ones, may have been incentives for trade. Regarding the EIA, it appears that Greece was not significantly cut-off from long-distance trade interactions, though the later 12th and 11th centuries did witness a severe economic depression.

As noted at the beginning of this review, the whole book is well-considered and coherently argued. A well-informed reader may decide in some cases on different interpretations to those of Murray (with respect to the bronzes or demography, for example). Some more attention should have been paid to the accompanying artwork, as various figures and maps are very hard to read due to very similar grey scales or very small fonts.

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DONNELLAN (L.), NIZZO (V.) and BURGERS (G.-J.) (eds) **Conceptualising Early Colonisation**. Brussels: Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome, 2016. €75. Pp. 246. 9789074461825. doi:10.1017/S0075426918000368

This is the second volume of proceedings of the conference *Contextualising Early Colonisation: Archaeology, Sources, Chronology and Interpretative Models between Italy and the Mediterranean*, held in Rome in June 2012, and it contains 19 theoretical papers. Expansion and settlement overseas were at the core of Archaic Greek history. Reconsideration is inevitable within the general trend to revision(ism), but this has simply underlined a growing division between Anglo-Saxon and continental scholarship, not just about the nature of Greek colonization but also the terminology used to discuss it, even the propriety of discussing it. Such is the context – and the volume and conference titles hint at this continuing division. The content illustrates the changing emphases in the study of Greek colonization in recent decades, not least a welcome increase in the use of archaeological evidence, a necessity because interest in relations between Greeks and (illiterate) non-Greeks in colonial situations, cultural contacts, identity formation, hybridization, etc. has burgeoned. Meanwhile, just as the study of modern-era institutional and constitutional history has fallen by the wayside (in the Anglosphere), so has the study of the emergence and institutional and organizational development of *poleis* in colonial areas.

L. Donnellan and V. Nizzo's extensive introduction (9–20), which outlines the history of the debate, including the influence of identity, postcolonial and network studies on contemporary scholarship, states the volume's purpose: to contextualize 'colonization' archaeologically, historically and methodologically. The chapters by R. Osborne (21–26) and I. Malkin (27–50) expose the issues. The former restates his distaste for the use of the term 'colonization' for Greek overseas expansion because of its supposedly misleading associations with modern empire and its implication that Greek settlements, like modern colonies, were state-organized projects ('It ain't necessarily so': surely Pennsylvania, Rhodesia, South Australia, etc. were closer to individual enterprises?) at a time when the *polis* was still an adolescent incapable of such activity. Malkin, now revising (or repudiating?) his own revisionism, makes a robust defence of the traditional view, the