series of raids and a gradual dispersal of Dorian-Greek speakers across the old Mycenaean world over a period of a century or more. The palatial systems, which may have been suffering in any case from internal economic problems, could not recover from these pressures. The centres collapsed: the palatial megara were not rebuilt; extensive foreign contacts of the sort seen in the Uluburun wreck ceased; administrative systems ended, and with them went the system of writing peculiar to the palaces.

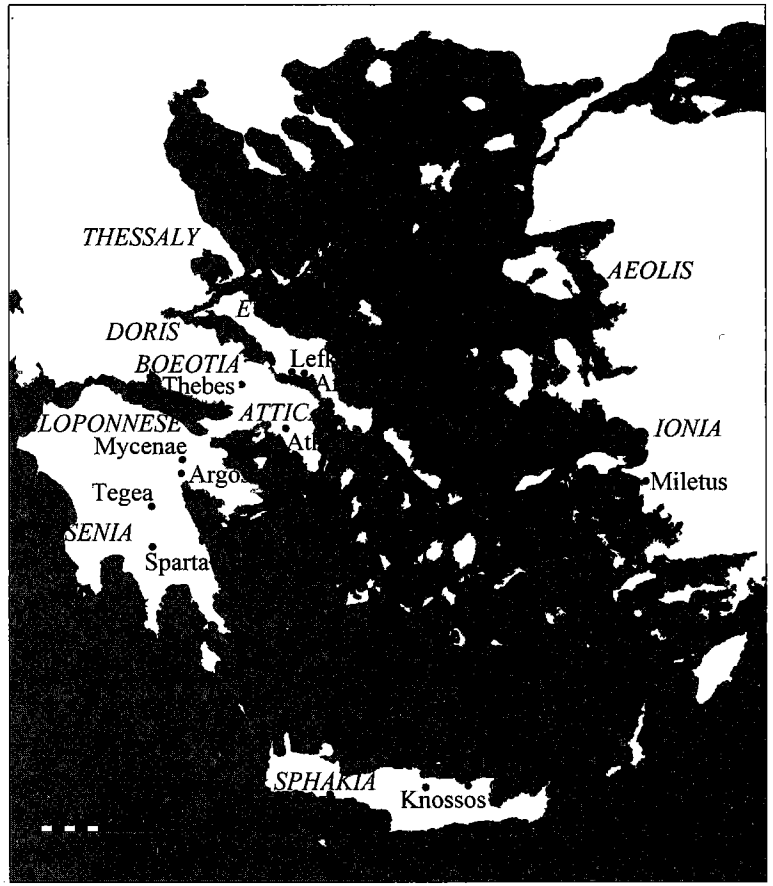
The palaces of Crete and the mainland are often portrayed as the start of European civilization. They were indeed successful and durable institutions, with a high degree of complexity, but they were also very small in comparison to the contemporary Near Eastern states in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Anatolia. It was arguably the superpowers of the Near East in the second millennium that were the real drivers of change. When the palatial systems on Crete and the mainland collapsed, their inheritance to the next generations was meagre. The subsequent period, as we shall see in the next chapter, was a much simpler, and narrower, world. But these palatial cultures loom large for us for two reasons. First, the Cretan and the mainland palaces were run by people who spoke Greek, an early form of the language spoken today by Greeks from Athens to Melbourne. Secondly, memories of this period were crucial to Greeks, Romans and other peoples. For them, the Trojan War and its immediate aftermath formed the upper horizon of their consciousness of the human past, and became the foundation of European identity.

2

The Mediterranean, the Levant and Middle Europe: 1100–800 BC

In the period following the ending of palatial organization on the Greek mainland (around 1200 BC), many existing settlements and religious sites continued in use, but the Aegean world moved into what used to be known as the 'Dark Age' of Greece, characterized by the complete collapse of the palatial systems, loss of external connections and extensive migrations of populations. The term 'Dark Age' is out of fashion, because it is too negative in tone for what we now know of the period. Instead, it is better to talk more neutrally of the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age. This transition happened at different times in different parts of the Mediterranean world (around 1070 BC in Greece); its earliest phase, on which this chapter will focus, is known as the 'early Iron Age'. The world of the early Iron Age was much less complex in terms of organization and interconnections than what had gone before, but by the end of the period there was an increased level of connections again, especially with the Near East. Here, we shall set in parallel the developments of the Aegean, Italy and Middle Europe in this period, relating them to the changing balance of power in the Near East.

The site of Lefkandi on the island of Euboea offers the best starting point for understanding this period. Named after a modern village (its ancient name is unknown), the site of Lefkandi lies halfway down the west coast of Euboea. There had been a settlement here since at least 2400 BC, but during the palatial period it came under the sway of the palace at Thebes; Amarynthos, about 15 kilometres east of Lefkandi, appears in the Theban Linear B tablets. Around 1200 BC, with the collapse of the organization of the palaces, including that at Thebes, Lefkandi flourished. The site was violently destroyed at least twice during the twelfth century, but was swiftly rebuilt on both occasions. The large and prosperous houses, on a small hill projecting into the sea (the promontory



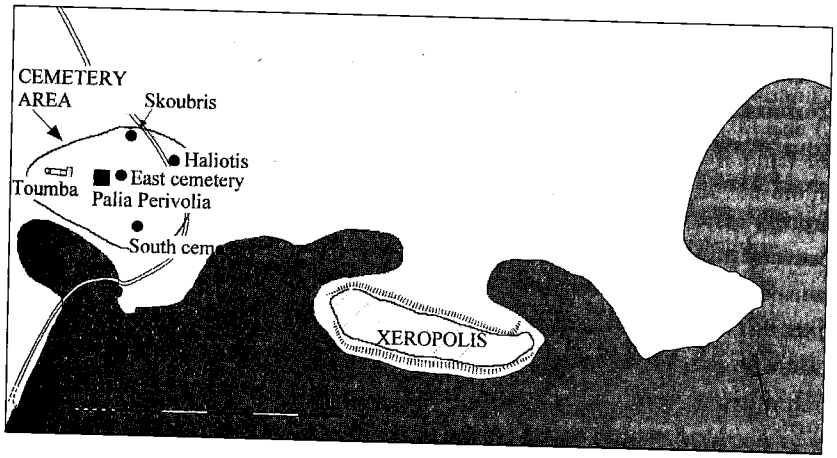
Map 4. The Aegean *c.* 1100 BC.

today known as Xeropolis), extended over about 7 hectares. People continued to live at Lefkandi during the early Iron Age, down to the end of the eighth century. Crucially, there is no break after the collapse of the palaces, between what we call the Bronze and Iron Ages.

The term 'early Iron Age' is particularly well suited to the site at Lefkandi. High-status members of the society had access to the new iron technology, and iron swords and spearheads have been found in warriors' tombs from the site. More dramatically, excavations of the settlement in 2006–2008 discovered a large building: dating to the twelfth century BC, the building measured 12 × 5.5 metres; rebuilt later in the twelfth century, it was then at least 15 × 8 metres. This must have been the residence of one of the major families at Lefkandi. Excavations in 2006–2008 also

uncovered part of a major, complex double wall, of early date, eleventh or tenth century; it seems to have been a wall marking the entrance to the settlement, with ritual deposits in front of it.

The cemeteries used by those who lived at Lefkandi are also extremely important. It is relatively unusual for excavations at a single site to uncover both houses and tombs of the same period; at Lefkandi, we can study and compare the spaces of both the living and the dead. The cemeteries lie about 500 metres west of the residential site, on a hillside overlooking the settlement at Xeropolis. There are at least five separate funerary areas, with 193 tombs and 104 cremation pyres, extending over about 5 hectares. The burials here began at the very start of the early Iron Age, and the lack of earlier tombs on this hillside suggests, contrary to the evidence from Xeropolis, that the community at Lefkandi was undergoing radical changes at this time. The richest funerary plot is at Toumba (modern Greek for 'mound'), at the top of the hillside. Around 950 BC the area of the Toumba plot was levelled, and in the middle were dug two shafts, for the burial of a man and a woman (see Figure 8). After the man was cremated on a pyre, his ashes were wrapped in a special cloth and put in a bronze two-handled jar, a treasured object, imported from Cyprus a hundred years previously. The jar was then placed in one of the shafts, along with special iron objects, a sword and spearhead, and a whetstone



Map 5. Lefkandi. Settlement at Xeropolis in centre; cemetery area, including Toumba, on left; the modern road is also marked. The estimated line of the ancient coast is given; note that Xeropolis was joined to the mainland by only a narrow isthmus, and that the sea was closer to the cemetery area than today.

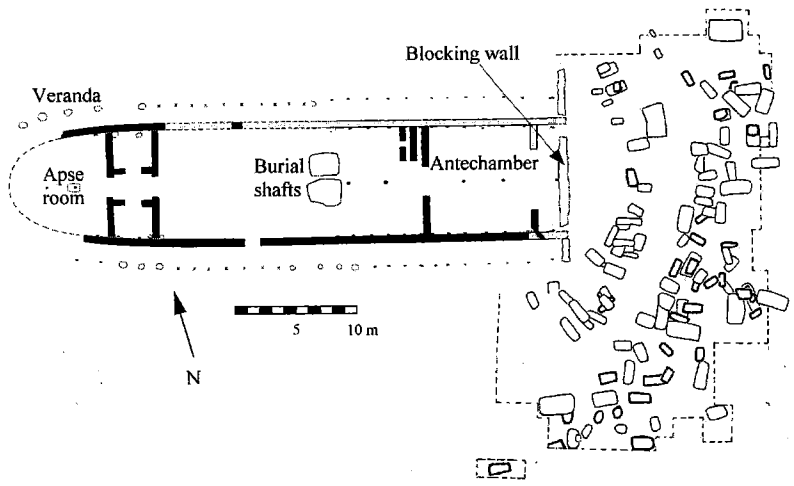


Figure 8. Plan of the 'Heroön' at Lefkandi.

for sharpening them. Next to it was placed the body of a woman, probably his wife, in a wooden coffin, along with lavish gold jewellery; one item, a gold pendant, was another, even older treasure, perhaps imported from Syria, and dating back to around 1700 BC (Plate 7). Next to her head was put an iron knife with an ivory handle. The knife, the fact that both people were probably buried at the same time, and the fact that the woman had not been cremated, suggest strongly that she was killed, or killed herself, in order to be buried with her husband. Four horses were sacrificed, and their bodies thrown in a separate shaft.

These funerary offerings were radically different from those of preceding centuries. In the later Bronze Age, warrior burials do not differ significantly from any other kind of burials: some tombs have weapons in, some do not. By contrast, the early Iron Age warrior graves at Toumba and elsewhere are vastly more lavish than other contemporary graves: the warriors of Lefkandi formed an elite class in early Iron Age society. The killing of the horses and, in many cases, deliberate damage of the weapons in early Iron Age warrior graves act as conspicuous demonstrations of the family's wealth; this family could afford to damage or destroy goods of great value. Also new and striking is the burial of rare and valuable antique objects in the Toumba graves, treasures linking the family to the remote past.

Finally, the different modes of burial for the man and the woman at Toumba were new markers of difference between the genders; the lavishness of the woman's burial is a remarkable indication of the prestige of women within the elite families of the period. Similarly, the earliest of a series of rich graves in central Athens around 850 BC was of a woman. On her pyre were broken dozens of fine pots. Her ashes were placed in a magnificent pottery vessel, along with fine jewellery. Alongside it was placed a clay chest, on whose lid were five model granaries, signs of the basis of the woman's wealth.

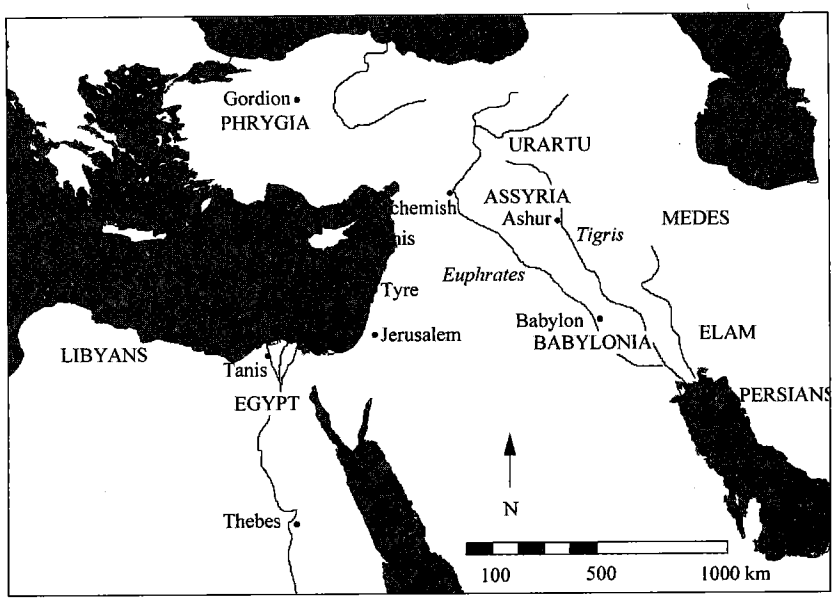
The lavishness of the Toumba burials, including the heirloom objects, shows that the man and woman interred here were the leading figures of the community at the time. We can only guess at what their titles might have been, but it is tempting to think of the term *basileus*. In the Mycenaean period (above, p. 26), *basileis* had been local officials, but by the seventh century BC it was used for individual or collective 'nobles'. Those buried at Toumba were certainly distinguished enough to be described in this manner. There are striking parallels between the Toumba burials and the funeral of Patroclus later depicted in Homer's *Iliad* (below, p. 102): common features include the killing of the horses, the cremation of the man, and the wrapping of his ashes in expensive cloth and their deposition in a special metal vessel. These parallels, and the differences from the Bronze Age graves of an earlier epoch, illustrate how much 'heroic' material in Homer was derived not from the age of the palaces, but from the 'Dark Age' centuries immediately preceding his own day.

The status of those buried at Toumba was further emphasized by the construction of an extraordinary building over the two shafts: a huge rectangular structure (50 × 14 metres) with mudbrick walls resting on a rubble stone base about 1.3 metres high. The building had a porch, an antechamber, a central room, with the two shafts, two small rooms on either side of a passageway, and an apsidal room; round it ran a veranda, attested by the surviving holes for the posts which supported the roof. The whole building must have been modelled on houses, but it is much larger than any other contemporary house known in Greece; it is half as long again as the 'hundred-foot' temples of the eighth century BC, and is indeed the largest structure known to have been built in the Greek world for the five hundred years between 1200 and 700 BC. The building, despite its scale, was probably never used, and was largely dismantled not long after it was built. A huge mound of earth was then built on top of it,

which happily preserved for the archaeologists the stone base and mud-brick walls of the building to a height of 1.5 metres.

Though this extraordinary building is sometimes known as a 'heroön', or place of hero sacrifices, there is no sign that offerings were made to the deceased, either in the building before it was dismantled, or afterwards on the mound. The mound simply served as a marker of the grand burial. The area to the east of the mound, in front of where the building had been, was used for the next hundred years for a series of exceptionally wealthy graves of both men and women (Plate 8). These later generations buried at Toumba wished to present themselves as the descendants of the couple in the original burial, asserting their claims to be the leading family of Lefkandi.

The extraordinary changes at Lefkandi, and other sites in the Greek world, need to be seen in the context of the wider world of the Near East. There were major disruptions to the Near Eastern political systems established in the mid-second millennium BC, and as a result very few written texts survive from anywhere for this period. Like Linear B, the writing systems and habits of the Near East were tied very closely to



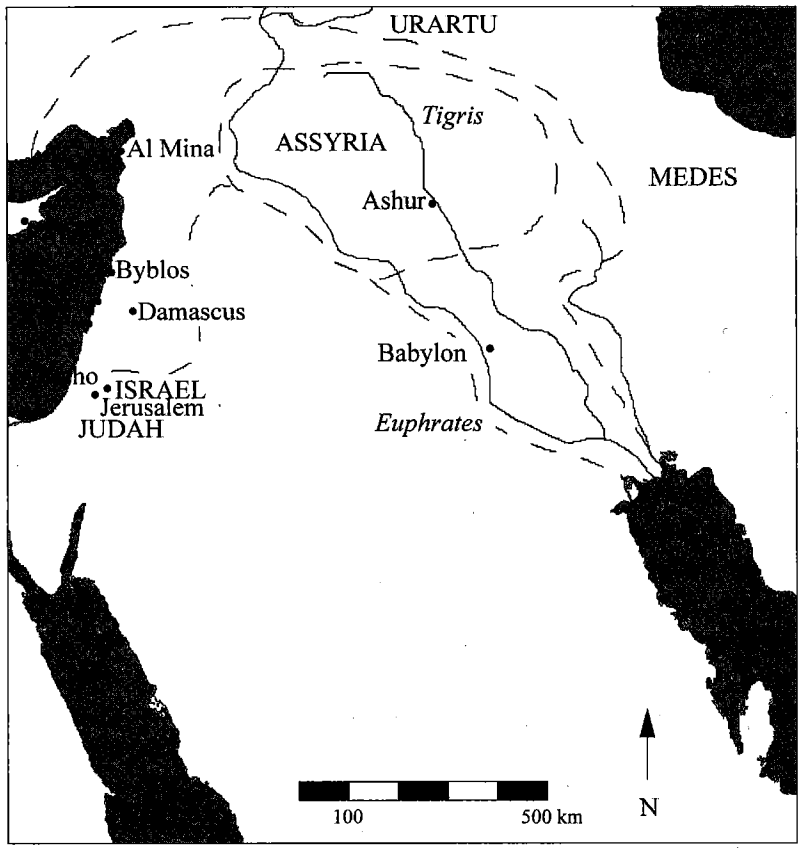
Map 6. The Near East in the early first millennium BC.

particular palatial structures, and when those structures collapsed, the habit of writing went with them.

The relative stability of Egypt's borders might suggest that the country as a whole was also stable in this period. In fact, by the eleventh century BC the country of Egypt was effectively divided between two rulers, a king at Tanis, near the mouth of the Nile, and the high priest at Thebes in central Egypt. Libyans regularly raided from the west; indeed, they successfully claimed the throne of Egypt, forming two of the competing dynasties in this period. The 350 years (1070–712 BC), after the ending of the New Kingdom, known to Egyptologists as the Third Intermediate period, were a highly troubled epoch for the Egyptian state. Egypt lacked stable unitary government, and in the eleventh century the state lost control over its territories in the Levant, although links were re-established with the region in the years between 950 and 850 BC. The period ended with a disastrous series of civil wars in Egypt, and the takeover of the state from the south by Nubians.

Chronic instability also characterized the Hittite kingdom of central Asia Minor. Though it had been one of the major Near Eastern players in the second half of the second millennium BC, the kingdom collapsed completely around 1200 BC. In its place there emerged separate small-scale principalities. In the south-eastern part of the former Hittite kingdom were numerous small states, for example the one based at Carchemish on the river Euphrates. This was a huge walled city, about 110 hectares in size. These new rogue states saw themselves as heirs to the Hittites and are indeed called Neo-Hittite states by modern scholars. Their rulers drew on the names of earlier Hittite kings, and claimed to be the true heirs of the Hittite kingdom, one king styling himself 'Great King', as the Hittites had done. They continued to use Hittite iconography for public sculpture, and their script, though not the language, was a development of Hittite hieroglyphics. These new states, though they did not form a political unity, enjoyed much prosperity, in part thanks to the profitable trade in metals between the kingdom of Urartu (in the region of Armenia) and the Mediterranean states.

The central part of the former Hittite kingdom became the new kingdom of Phrygia, with its capital at Gordion (near modern Ankara). By the eighth century BC Phrygian power extended as far east as the former Hittite capital of Hattusa. The later-eighth-century 'King Mita of Mushki', known from contemporary Assyrian texts, became famous in



Map 7. The Near East in the ninth and eighth centuries BC. The inner border of Assyria is that of the mid-ninth century BC, and the larger border shows the extent of the state in the late eighth century BC.

later Greek legend as King Midas of the golden touch. Subsequently, the region west of the kingdom of Phrygia emerged as the kingdom of Lydia, centred on Sardis. Lydia seems to have been a fairly minor player in the eighth century BC; its power increased only in the seventh century with the emergence of a dynamic new ruling dynasty, which would eventually claim hegemony over all the Greek states of western Asia Minor. The Lydians also came to claim that they were the ancestors of the Etruscan peoples of Italy (below, p. 73).

In Mesopotamia the great Assyrian state of the second millennium was drastically weakened under repeated invasions from the west, and from Babylonia in the south. For a century after 1050 BC the texts largely

dry up, in both Assyria and Babylonia, but from the middle of the tenth century the Assyrians were once again asserting their control over the whole of Upper Mesopotamia (Map 7). This is the beginning of what is known as the Neo-Assyrian empire (883–610 BC). Further Assyrian expansion westwards in the eighth and seventh centuries was to have major consequences for the maritime states of the Levantine coast (below, pp. 86–7).

With the collapse of the old balance of power between Egypt, the Hittites and Assyria, the Levant in the tenth and ninth centuries was left largely to its own devices. The Iron Age cities in modern Lebanon – Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and others – were the direct successors of earlier Bronze Age cities. All these cities lay on the Mediterranean coast, some of them on islands just offshore, and were protected from the upheavals inland by a major chain of mountains (modern Mt. Lebanon, stretching from Hama in the north to the Golan Heights in the south). The inhabitants called themselves Canaanites, which is what they are also called in the Bible, but the Greeks knew them as 'Phoenicians'; this name was probably derived from *phoinix*, the Greek word for 'purple', because of the Phoenicians' pre-eminence in the production of purple dye, an important status symbol in the ancient world. Modern scholars follow the Greeks in using the term 'Phoenicians' for those Canaanites who lived in modern Lebanon and were not dispossessed by the Israelites (although this creates a rather artificial break between Bronze Age 'Canaanites' and Iron Age 'Phoenicians'). In the tenth and ninth centuries, under the leadership of the great naval fortress of Tyre, the Phoenicians became a major power, with trading interests to the south with King Solomon in Israel and as far down as the Red Sea, and in the course of the ninth century their interests also began to extend westwards (below, p. 76).

It was in this same period that the state of Israel first came into being. Although at the time Israel was just one of several small struggling principalities in the Levant, the story of the emergence of Israel has a particular resonance for us, since the lengthy accounts of the process in the Bible constitute a central part of our European heritage.

The biblical narratives are a fine early example of the creation of cultural memory. The first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, take the story from the Creation via the sojourn in Egypt to the Exodus from Egypt under Moses and the wanderings of the Israelites for 'forty years' in the desert. These books end with the death of Moses, looking down

from the peak of Mt. Nebo (in modern Jordan) over the Promised Land. The story is continued in the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, and it is their narrative that is especially important here. The process of composition of these texts is extremely complex, but it is generally believed that a first version of this history was put together about 620 BC, and a second version during the exile in Babylon about 550 BC. These books of the Bible are not, therefore, objective contemporary accounts of the formation of the state of Israel, but retrospective views, with particular theological, political and social axes to grind.

The conquest of Canaan, the Promised Land, under Joshua (conventionally dated to around 1200 BC) poses particular problems. The first twelve chapters of the Book of Joshua tell of the conquest of the Promised Land from the east, across the river Jordan, in a single military campaign under the leadership of Joshua. The first chapters of the Book of Judges, however, assume that the conquest was the work of a number of separate tribes, not of a united Israel. Nonetheless, both narratives present the coming of the Israelites as a military conquest.

A century of excavations has produced a wealth of material of potential relevance to the evaluation of the biblical narratives, but the interpretation of this material is extremely controversial. The difficulties arise partly because of the religious agendas of individual scholars, but also because (as in the case of the Trojan War), it is intrinsically problematic to try to correlate the evidence of archaeology with historical narratives. Archaeology can give us a very clear picture of long-term cultural processes; it is less good at illuminating the history of specific events.

Though some historians have argued that the archaeological evidence confirms the biblical 'conquest' model, there is some special pleading going on here. The familiar story of the walls of Jericho falling down at the blasts from Joshua's trumpets is an important test case, as Jericho was said to be Joshua's first conquest after crossing the river Jordan. Excavations at Jericho in the 1930s uncovered a great wall, which had collapsed, accompanied by a catastrophic fire; the excavator argued that this was the very wall described in the Bible. Sadly, subsequent excavations in the 1950s showed that the final phase of this wall dated to around 2350 BC, more than a millennium too early. It now seems clear that Jericho around 1200 BC (the time of the Israelite conquest) was a relatively small and undefended site, lacking a major fortification wall. There is a

total gap in the archaeological evidence at Jericho between the late fourteenth century BC and the beginnings of renewed settlement in the eleventh and tenth centuries BC – precisely the period in which the Israelite conquest of the region ought to fall. In this case, there is simply no easy way of marrying the biblical narrative with the archaeological evidence.

Similar problems arise with neighbouring towns in Canaan said to have been conquered by Joshua. Take, for example, the town of ʿAi, just north-west of Jericho, whose capture is vividly told in the Book of Joshua. The site of ʿAi, which is well preserved and has been fully excavated, was destroyed in the later third millennium. It was then abandoned until a humble village was established in the ruins of the third-millennium settlement around 1150 BC, only to be abandoned again around 1050 BC. According to the Book of Joshua, 'Joshua burned ʿAi, making it a ruin for evermore, a desolate place even today'. It looks as though this story arose from the desolation of ʿAi visible in the seventh century BC, when the Book of Joshua was written. The flourishing place which Joshua is said to have destroyed had in fact already been abandoned for a millennium by the time the Israelites arrived in Canaan.

Survey archaeology, conducted in this area for many years, suggests a rather different picture. In place of a unified military conquest, it shows a long-term process of peaceful settlement through the twelfth and into the eleventh centuries. The earliest Israelite settlements were located in the less inhabited parts of the hill country, just north of Jerusalem. The area to the south, Judah, was settled only from the tenth century BC onwards. If this evidence is correct, then the seventh-century biblical narratives transformed a slow, peaceful process into a something more dramatic, in order to stress the importance of the obedience of Israel to the will of Yahweh.

The first period of Israelite settlement in the region, known in the Bible as the period of the judges, was followed by the rule of David and Solomon (probably *c.* 1010–970 BC and 970–930 BC respectively). The biblical narrative gives a strongly idealized picture of their rule. Unfortunately, the archaeological evidence for the tenth century remains very sparse, and we have very little independent control over the biblical account. Though some sceptics have questioned the existence of David and Solomon, there are several strong arguments in favour of a historical kernel to the biblical accounts of these rulers. First, the name of David

has appeared on an Aramaic inscription from Tel Dan in northern Galilee dating to *c.* 850 BC, in which a king of Damascus boasted of his victories over a king of the 'House of David' (that is, Judah), and a king of Israel. This inscription provides some support for the idea that David was the founder of a dynasty in Judah, that he was a conquering king, and that there was a second dynasty in Israel to the north of Judah. Secondly, the triple construction of Solomon's temple, as described in the First Book of Kings, corresponds to a type of temple archaeologically well attested in the Levant between 1300 and 800 BC, but not at later periods. Thirdly, just after the death of Solomon, in the reign of Reheboam of Judah, 1 Kings reports an invasion of Judah by Shishak, pharaoh of Egypt. This invasion is independently attested in an inscription of the pharaoh Shoshenq I (= Shishak; 945–924 BC) from the temple complex at Karnak in Egypt, dating to *c.* 925 BC. This Egyptian evidence provides strong confirmation for the biblical account, and suggests that the author of 1 Kings had access to authentic royal annals going back to the tenth century; it would be very surprising for the author suddenly to move from legend to history, when he moved from David and Solomon to the following reign of Reheboam. Finally, 1 Kings refers to a certain 'Hiram, king of Tyre' (969–936 BC) as a contemporary of Solomon. The historicity of this reference is supported by the presence of a King Hiram at exactly this point in a later but apparently accurate king-list for Tyre.

What does all this add up to? It is impossible to be certain, but it seems that, on balance, the overall outline of the biblical narrative for the period from David onwards is likely to be broadly correct. David captured Jerusalem, and made it the capital of a newly organized kingdom. He moved the Ark of the Covenant there, and probably took steps towards building a temple, attempting to centralize the Yahweh cult under royal patronage. His sucessor Solomon then built the great temple and a large royal palace in Jerusalem, on a ridge 200 metres north of the city of David.

Archaeological evidence is very limited, because of later use of the site of the Temple: such evidence as might still exist probably lies buried underneath the Dome of the Rock. As the ridge was quite narrow, Solomon built a massive rectangular platform for his buildings. The size of the platform is known with near certainty, covering no less than 5 hectares, about the same size as the whole of the rest of the settlement at that time. The Temple was similar in design to earlier Canaanite

temples, but was much larger and grander in execution, requiring huge amounts of local labour. Solomon collaborated with the Phoenicians, as we noted earlier, in exploiting trade routes to the south. As a result he was able to hire Phoenician craftsmen and buy the finest timber (cedars of Mt. Lebanon) for the temple. Nonetheless, this Temple was quite unlike any which had been built in the region before this point. As Solomon is said to have announced, 'I have built the house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel.' Whereas both earlier and later Near Eastern temples normally housed images of the deity, Solomon's Temple was 'for the name of Yahweh'; it contained no graven image.

The biblical stories of David and Solomon cast a retrospectively rosy glow over their reigns. The biblical accounts reached their final form after the kingdom had fallen apart and after Solomon's Temple had been destroyed. We should resist the temptation to assume that all aspects of later Judaism were already securely established in the tenth century BC. Even the biblical accounts themselves make it clear that this was not the case. Major religious reforms are ascribed to the seventh-century King Josiah, who took drastic action against other, competing cults, and ordered the celebration of the Passover. 'No Passover like this one had ever been celebrated since the days when the judges ruled Israel or throughout the entire period of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.' This throw-away sentence warns us that the institutions of Judaism were the result of a long process of gradual evolution, not a single moment of reform or revelation even if most of the biblical texts suggest otherwise.

Modern explanations of the age of disorder in the Near East have ranged from the global to the specific. The old global explanation was that the old superpowers buckled under persistent pressure from the mysterious Sea Peoples *c.* 1200 BC, whom we met at the end of the previous chapter as a possible cause of the final destruction of the palaces of Crete and the Greek mainland.

As with most monocausal explanations, this will not do. The Sea Peoples are attested specifically only in Egyptian sources of two royal campaigns, in 1220 and 1186 BC (Plate 5). One of these texts claims, 'No country could stand before their arms: Hatti (the Hittites), Kode (Cilicia in southern Turkey), Carchemish (on the Euphrates), Arzawa (west of the Hittites) and Alashiya (Cyprus).' Though this seems at first sight

agreeably clear and specific, the text is so highly coloured that it cannot be taken at face value. The 'Sea Peoples' were probably a unified force only in the eyes of the Egyptian kings who took the credit for beating them. Carchemish shows no signs of destruction by Sea Peoples or anyone else in this period, and the Neo-Hittite state at Carchemish shows absolute continuity in its preservation of earlier Hittite traditions. Admittedly, around 1200 BC Hattusa itself was destroyed, but there is no sign of an invasion by Sea Peoples; an obscure people called the Kaska, from the mountainous area to the north of Hattusa, who had long been sporadically attacking the Hittites, are more likely to have been responsible.

Rather than invoking the shadowy Sea Peoples as the primary cause of the collapse of the old order in the Near East, it is better to think first of socio-political problems inside each individual state. There are various signs of internal problems within the Hittite state, including opposition from within the ruling elite, the diminution of royal authority, and increasing insubordination of vassal rulers. Crucial imports of grain, brought in via a port on the south-east coast of Turkey, had been disrupted; it was probably as a consequence of this disruption that the Hittites sent a naval expedition to restore their authority over Cyprus.

The Near East had long suffered from the activities of various small marauding groups, and these raids certainly increased in this period, thereby exacerbating the internal problems of the Near Eastern superpowers. Small-scale piratical raids along the coasts probably intensified. Other people from southern Asia Minor in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries seem to have hired themselves out as mercenaries for various states, including the Libyans in their wars against the Egyptians. The Egyptians themselves sometimes employed such mercenaries. One such group, the Peleset, were settled by the Egyptians as garrisons in Palestine. With the breakdown of Egyptian power outside Egypt, the Peleset broke off into independent communities; these were the warlike people known to their eastern neighbours and rivals, the Israelites, as the Philistines.

The violent upheavals which engulfed the Near East around the turn of the millennium are important for the Greek world in various ways. To start with, they offer a series of analogies to the changes which were under way in Greece. The breakdown of centralized control is a common theme across the entire Near East, but the forms this took varied in

different regions. While Egypt weathered the storm, and Assyria eventually recovered its former empire, the Hittite empire fragmented into a number of smaller states, as local dynasts successfully claimed territory for themselves. The collapse of the Hittite empire may provide a useful analogy for the breakdown of the Mycenaean kingdoms in Crete and mainland Greece.

The disturbances in the Near East also had direct consequences for the Greek world. The prosperous trading networks exemplified in the Uluburun wreck could continue only if there were stable Near Eastern entrepôts. The sack of Ugarit, where the Uluburun ship may have originated, around 1200 BC meant the end of that particular trading network; new trading connections could only be built up once new Near Eastern entrepôts had emerged to take their place.

The collapse of the palatial systems on Crete around 1350 BC and on the Greek mainland around 1200 BC was followed by what some call a 'post-palatial twilight'. But it was a twilight, not complete darkness; in many places, the lights stayed on. On Crete, most settlements did undergo some contraction in size, but some places, for example, Khania and Malia, continued to be prosperous, with new houses being built. In addition, new territorial units were created, with settlements located away from the sea in readily defensible locations. For example, in Sphakia people lived at a new site, Kolokasia Kastro, on a steeply sloping prong, with sheer cliffs to the north and crags on almost all the other sides (Plate 19). At around 600 metres above sea level, the site afforded superb views over the coastal plain to the south, and up a gorge to the north. Kolokasia Kastro overlaps chronologically with the nearby site of Patsianos Kephala, on a gentle saddle between two hills, which replaced it altogether by around 800 BC. The site at Patsianos Kephala is located at a much lower altitude (*c.* 250 metres), and so was able to exploit more fully the resources of hills, plain and sea.

Though Cretan palatial control over religious life came to an end, people continued to worship at many of the same sites. Some peak sanctuaries and caves continued to be popular throughout this period, and down into the Iron Age. But it is important not to claim too much from such a statement. Continuity in the religious use of a site does not necessarily mean that there was also continuity in religious practices or beliefs. As religion was deeply embedded in social and political structures, it was bound to change radically with the collapse of the palaces. Nonetheless,

radical change does not mean that the past was entirely written off. As we saw in Chapter 1 in the context of Pylos, what is important is the uses people make of what they know about past rituals and places.

It is particularly telling that the ruins of the old palaces, strong presences in the Cretan landscape, were reused, not for settlement, but for religious purposes. At Knossos, the early Iron Age settlement was just west of the palace, and the palace itself was the setting for various cults. A cult in the Spring Chamber, which was partly modelled on a Bronze Age cult in the Shrine of the Double Axes, continued to be celebrated down into the ninth century BC. By the eighth century at the latest, a new sanctuary, dedicated to the goddess Demeter, was established just south of the palace. Since this sanctuary too is situated beside a water source, it is possible that it was a direct continuation of the Spring Chamber cult. In the south-west corner of the Central Court of the palace a second new cult was up and running by the eighth century, and the worshippers were certainly aware of the site's palatial past; elsewhere in the palace a Minoan bull fresco was still visible in the eighth century.

Relevant to the early Iron Age sanctuaries at Knossos are the changes in the contemporary cemetery, just north of the palace. This cemetery, in use from the eleventh century onwards, at first had a great variety of tombs. From the end of the ninth century, some people were buried in chamber tombs, probably reused from the Bronze Age. The first burials here were lavish, and were then followed for some centuries by large numbers of more modest burials. The funerary pottery was also inspired by Bronze Age motifs. It looks as though in the ninth century some families won themselves a prominent position in local Knossian society by playing up their connections to the ancient architectural and pottery styles. It is hard to say exactly what these new Iron Age communities made of their Bronze Age predecessors, but it is very striking how eager they were, both through ritual activity on the ancient palace-sites and through their elite burial practices, to relate their new world to the surviving traces of the palatial past.

On the Greek mainland during the twelfth and early eleventh centuries, Bronze Age Mycenaean culture ended not suddenly, but gradually. The sites at Mycenae and Tiryns were not abandoned after the destruction of their palaces. Houses were rebuilt, and there were some new large buildings, but by the early eleventh century the citadels were changing their functions: graves are found on the citadel at Mycenae and on the

Acropolis at Athens, which probably indicates the final abandonment of the old hilltop settlements. It is also a sign of the times that the graves were simple pits, rather than the more elaborate and expensive chamber tombs of previous centuries. The gradual demise of Mycenaean culture was accompanied by an increase in cultural regionalism. On the island of Euboea, four of the five main Bronze Age settlements continued after the collapse of Thebes, which had previously controlled much of the island. Some fourteen settlements are known from the period after about 1050 BC (the early Iron Age). Most of them are small, but they were probably inhabited continuously from the Bronze Age through to the early Iron Age. The site at Lefkandi, which we have met already, was probably typical of the main places on Euboea. At Lefkandi, despite at least two major destructions, there was continuity from the end of the Mycenaean world down into the early first millennium BC.

Nonetheless, the archaeology paints a depressing picture of the Greek world in the centuries after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces. Overall, the number of inhabited places in mainland Greece fell by two-thirds in the twelfth century, and by another two-thirds in the eleventh century. This was the low point, and recovery then began: settlement numbers doubled in the tenth century, and doubled again in the ninth–eighth centuries. Of course, settlement numbers on their own mean nothing: the crucial variable is settlement size. If individual places were larger in the eleventh century than before or later, the drop in the number of settlements would be less significant. But in fact the scale of settlements in the early Iron Age is generally smaller than that in the periods on either side. Some have tried to quantify the extent of the drop in population, but such estimates are premature on the basis of what we know at present.

It seems obvious that population levels fell at the end of the Bronze Age, and increased again in the course of the early Iron Age. Not only did the number of settlements fall, but the places themselves were less complex than what had gone before. Clustered, or 'nucleated', settlements did persist, especially on Crete, where they ranged from 1 to 4 hectares, but on the Greek mainland, 'settlements' often consisted of a few loose groups of dwellings, each with just a handful of houses. There is no sign of centralized organization, no grand stone architecture, and no clearly delimited public spaces.

The later Greeks seem to have preserved the memory of this drastic

fall in population numbers. The *Cypria*, an epic of the seventh century BC, which tells the story of the Trojan War roughly down to where Homer's *Iliad* starts, claimed that Zeus brought about the Trojan War and its loss of life in order to relieve the earth of its existing over-population. It is hard not to think that we have here a dim recollection of the catastrophic population decline after the end of the palaces; for the audience of the *Cypria*, the world was a smaller and meaner place than it had been in the days before the Trojan War.

An important element in the recovery of Greece was the re-establishment of its old external contacts. While in the Bronze Age these overseas links had been organized mostly by the palaces, now connections were made by a new class of people. In the eleventh century Lefkandi was in contact with other settlements in the Aegean, and by the tenth century it was part of a Euboean hub with connections to other communities in central mainland Greece, the coast of Thessaly, and some of the Aegean islands. These connections were partly underpinned by the fact that from around 950 BC Euboea was at the forefront of moves to reconnect with the Levant. Contacts with the Levant had dropped off dramatically in the eleventh century, but in the tenth century the Levantine situation was transformed by the emergence of a new centre at the powerful city of Tyre. Between 950 and 900 BC increasing quantities of Euboean pottery, drinking cups and two-handled jars (probably used to transport olive oil) begin to appear at Tyre and other Levantine sites. This pottery may indicate the temporary presence of Euboeans in this region in search of prestigious items; the debate over whether it was Euboeans or Phoenicians who carried the pottery is discussed further in Chapter 3. One important prestige material which travelled from Levant to Euboea was the new metal, iron. The iron for the swords and spearheads found in tombs at Lefkandi probably came from Cyprus, either directly or via Tyrian intermediaries.

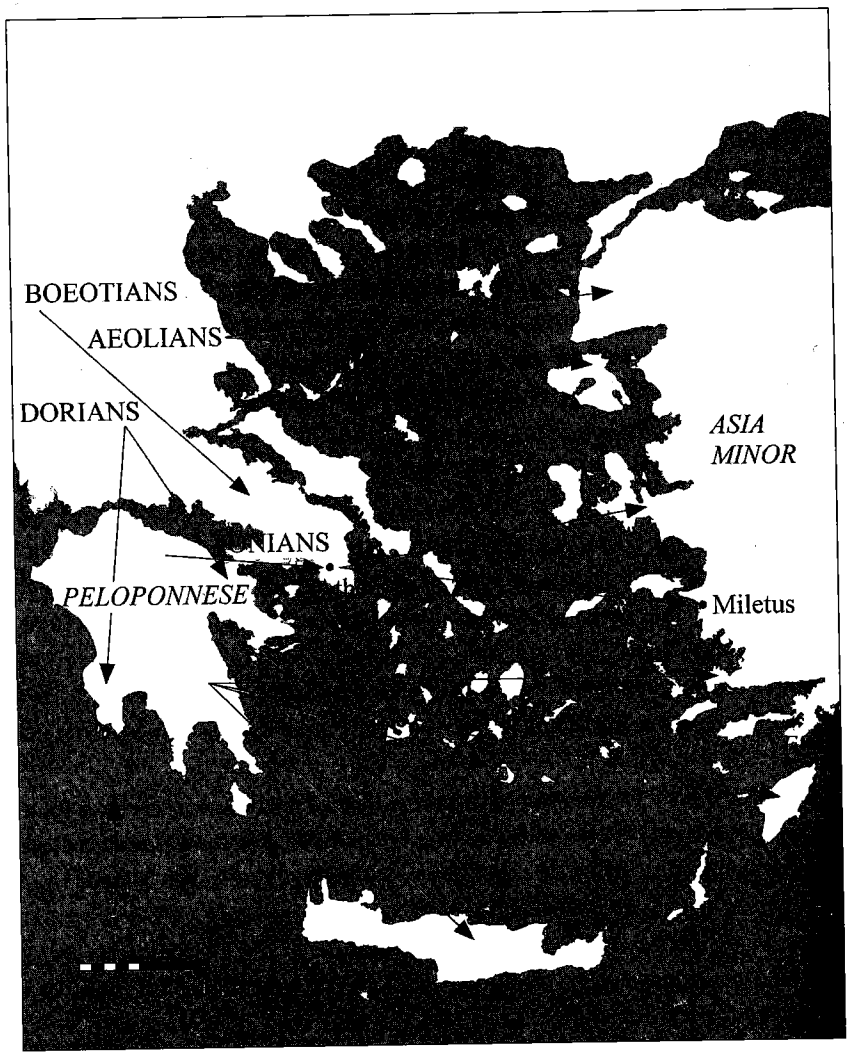
Cyprus' major metal resources were of great importance in this period. In the Bronze Age, Cyprus, known as Alashiya, had been an important source of bronze, both to the east and to the west; it was probably Cypriot bronze that was carried on the ship that sank off Uluburun. The collapse of the major contemporary states towards the end of the thirteenth century, and the closing down of overseas markets, led to the abandonment of the existing urban settlements on Cyprus in the twelfth century. But the interruption of urban life on Cyprus was quite short-lived,

especially in comparison with the long period of decline in the Aegean. Already in the eleventh and tenth centuries a new pattern of urban settlement was established on Cyprus which would endure for the rest of Classical antiquity.

This new pattern may be connected with the arrival of Greek-speaking settlers from the Aegean. In later periods, stories were told which claimed that the kingdoms of Cyprus had been founded by Trojan War heroes; the city of Salamis on Cyprus had supposedly been founded by Teucer, half-brother of Ajax. In addition, and very unusually, literacy was not lost on Cyprus after the end of the Bronze Age. In the Bronze Age, the Cypriots had used a local script derived from Minoan Linear A. Since this Cypriot script does not seem to have been restricted to the administration of the urban centres, it may (unlike the scripts of the Cretan and mainland Greek palaces) have survived the abandonment of the Cypriot Bronze Age centres. In the Iron Age, what is probably a development of this Cypriot script (the 'Cypriot syllabary') was used to transcribe two different languages, the new Greek language and a local language, so-called 'Eteocypriot'. The Cypriot syllabary continued to be employed on Cyprus for writing Greek even after the invention of the Greek alphabet in the eighth century, and indeed survived as late as the third century BC.

The strength of cultural continuity reflected in the history of the local Cypriot writing-systems hints at the resilience of the local societies of Iron Age Cyprus. The early creation of a new, stable settlement system was partly due also to the ability of the islanders to move from bronze to iron production. The Cypriot principalities were the first states in the Mediterranean to organize industrial production of iron, and their prosperity was bound up with this new technology. It was primarily the island's rich mineral resources which drew the Phoenicians to found their first overseas colony here, on the south coast of the island at Kition (modern Larnaka) (below, p. 87).

According to later Greek tradition, the period after the Trojan War was characterized by mass movements of Greek-speaking peoples around the Aegean basin. There were said to have been four major migrations in the Aegean: the Aeolians eastwards across the Aegean; the Boeotians south into what became called Boeotia; the Dorians south to the Peloponnese; and the Ionians east to Asia Minor. In the fifth century BC it was calculated



Map 8. Migrations according to Greek tradition.

that the Aeolians migrated first, and were succeeded by the Boeotians, sixty years after the fall of Troy, then the Dorians, eighty years after the fall of Troy, followed shortly by the Ionians.

These great migrations formed an important part of the historical consciousness of later Greeks, and a rich mythological tradition grew up around them. The Boeotians claimed to have been expelled from Thessaly in northern Greece, moving south to the territory around Thebes, what had previously been called the land of Kadmos. Kadmos was understood

to have been the founder of Thebes, far back in the early heroic age, and the originator of a dynasty that ruled until after the Trojan War. So far so good. The oddity about Kadmos is that he was also said to have been a Phoenician, sent by his father to search, vainly, for his sister Europa, abducted by Zeus to Crete. The Boeotians claimed to have occupied the territory of the expelled Kadmeians, and their migrant origins were commonly accepted by the fifth century BC.

The Dorian inhabitants of the Peloponnese also saw themselves as post-Trojan War immigrants. The Dorians were said to have originated in north-central Greece, and to have invaded southern Greece in order to restore the sons of Heracles, the Heracleidae, to their ancestral home in the Peloponnese. This story, like the Boeotian migration, was widely accepted by the fifth century BC; we shall examine some of the uses later made of this account of the Dorian invasion of the Peloponnese in the next two chapters. Disturbances following the Dorian invasion were also said to have resulted in the expulsion of the Ionians from their original homelands in the northern Peloponnese. According to the most popular account, the Ionians settled first in Attica, and from there moved on again, under the leadership of the sons of the Athenian king Kodros. As we shall see in Chapter 4, the Athenians of the fifth century BC used this story as the basis of their claim to be the 'mother-city' of the Ionians; however, there was probably a different, and earlier, account of the Ionian migration in which the Ionians went directly east across the Aegean from the Peloponnese, without stopping in Attica at all.

The Ionian migration eastwards was said to have resulted in the conquest of twelve cities along the west coast of Asia Minor. The party under Neileus, one of Kodros' sons, made for Miletus. The Ionian invaders killed all the males they captured, marrying their wives and daughters; these forced marriages were said to be the origin of a Milesian law which forbade women to sit at table with their husbands or to address them by name. In the second century AD the grave of Neileus would be pointed out on the left of the main road, not far from the south gate of the city. The islands south of Ionia (the modern Dodecanese) were also said to have been colonized by mainland Greeks at around the same time, by Dorians, not long after the return of the Heracleidae to the Peloponnese.

The historicity of these migrations is deeply controversial. Although many of the details of the migrations as presented by later Greek writers

do not stand up to serious scrutiny, linguistic and archaeological evidence does suggest that these later traditions were not invented out of thin air. Modern linguistic analysis has shown that there were three main Greek dialect groups in the Aegean by the seventh century BC. The so-called West Greek dialects were concentrated in north-western and central Greece, the Peloponnese, Crete and the Dodecanese; the Aeolic dialects were spoken in Thessaly, Boeotia, and north-west Asia Minor; and Attic-Ionic dialects were spoken in Attica, Euboea, the central Aegean islands and along the central part of the Asia Minor coast. The distribution patterns of these three dialect groups overlap quite neatly with the migration stories.

However, it is less clear whether this 'dialect map' really constitutes independent evidence for the migrations. The Greeks were themselves perfectly conscious of the general linguistic map of Greece, and it is quite possible that it is precisely the distribution of the various dialects which lies behind some of the later Greek accounts of the migrations. In addition, we cannot assume that the linguistic distribution pattern is the result of waves of mass migrations. Dialects, and languages, can change as the result of the movement of relatively small numbers of people. And the relative uniformity of dialect in Ionia, for example, could be the result, not of an original wave of migrants to the region speaking the same dialect, but of later harmonization of different local dialects.

Nonetheless, despite these caveats, it is undoubtedly the case that the linguistic map of central and north-western Asia Minor was quite different by the Classical period from what it had been in the Bronze Age. In the late second millennium BC the population in that area had spoken Luwian, a non-Greek language; by the mid-first millennium BC, the inhabitants spoke a dialect of Greek. It seems very likely that some sort of migration ultimately underlay this linguistic change.

Archaeological evidence has also been brought into play. As we have seen, the collapse of the Mycenaean states cannot be attributed to assaults by Dorian migrants. Nor is it easy to claim that the Dorians filtered into the Peloponnese during the 'palatial twilight', taking over an already weakened area. The number and size of sites in the Peloponnese were in decline in this period, and there is nothing to mark out the material culture of the period as having intrusive northern elements. Indeed, the Dorians are archaeologically indistinguishable from 'earlier' peoples in the Peloponnese. This negative point, however, does not argue against

the idea of some sort of immigration by Dorians; that the early Israelites are often difficult to distinguish archaeologically from the Canaanites does not show that the biblical stories of the Israelite migration are entirely false.

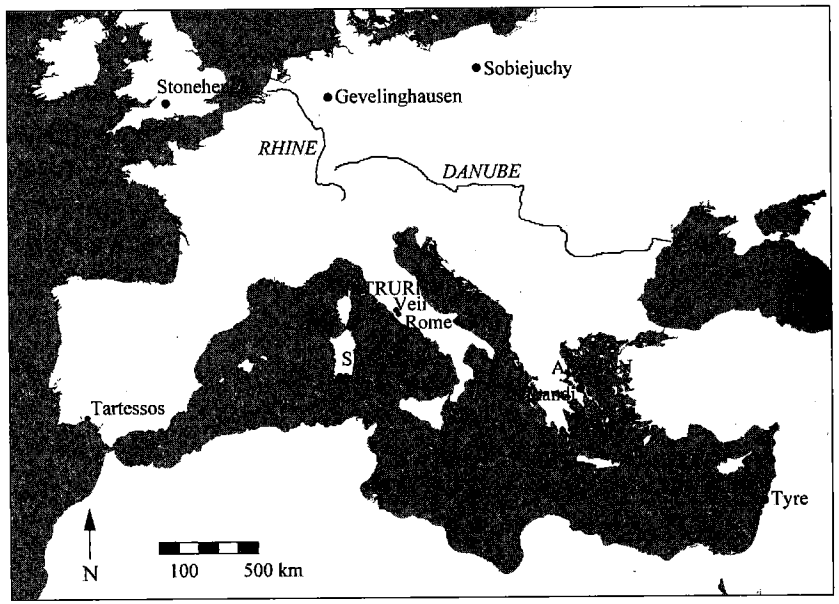
In Ionia, we are on firmer ground. The collapse of the Mycenaean palaces of Crete and the Greek mainland, combined with the decline of Hittite power in the east, left the Mycenaean settlements in the central and southern part of western Asia Minor very exposed. Milawanda (Miletus) had been ruled by a vassal of the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV, under whom a fortification wall was built. The site was left wide open to foreign assaults after 1200 BC, and was certainly destroyed around 1100 BC. There was then a new beginning. Some eleventh-century pottery, found on top of the ruins of the old fortification wall, shows close connections to contemporary pottery from the western Aegean. By the tenth century, pottery from Miletus continues to imitate west-Aegean styles, but was now being made of local clay; this might suggest that some foreign craftsmen had settled at Miletus. These similarities in pottery styles can hardly be taken as proof of the great migratory expedition of Neileus and his men from Attica to Miletus, but they do suggest that these later traditions may have had some real historical foundation.

The migration stories cannot be used to reconstruct the events of the centuries following the fall of the mainland palaces in any detail. These stories were developed in later generations in support of contemporary imperatives. But it is too sceptical to claim that later Greeks were simply inventing past events, and hence present identities, for their own purposes. The Greeks' sense of the sequence of events that connected the Trojan War and its aftermath to the present day was ultimately based on real, albeit hazy, memories of the real circumstances of the Aegean world in the eleventh and tenth centuries BC.

The changes from the Bronze to the Iron Age took different forms in different regions. In the Aegean, palatial systems collapsed and settlements were abandoned, with new settlements located in different and often less accessible places. The modern name for this new epoch, the 'Iron Age', derives from a major technological change which occurred in this period. Iron had been used in the palatial period, but only exceptionally, for special gifts and for some rituals. In the course of the eleventh and tenth

centuries, iron-working techniques spread through the Aegean, probably from Cyprus, and reliable sources of iron ore were located, so that by 900 BC iron had become the practical and bronze the decorative metal. This technological change was driven in part by the emergence of new local elites, whose status was founded on their highly profitable exploitation of the new technology.

In the central and western part of the Mediterranean and in middle Europe the picture is rather different. The new metal technology spread here too, slightly later than in the Mediterranean, but without causing violent dislocations. The period from 1300 to 700 BC was marked by a slow growth in the number and scale of settlements. It is symptomatic of the lack of ruptures in western Europe that the great monument of Stonehenge, erected around 2300 BC, remained in use throughout this period. Local pottery of the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age has been found in holes surrounding the central construction, and around 1100 BC, ditches were dug to extend the approach way to Stonehenge by 2 kilometres towards the river Avon. It does not follow that rituals at Stonehenge remained the same, but this type of activity at Stonehenge shows much more continuity with the Bronze Age past than does (for



Map 9. The Mediterranean and middle Europe in the tenth and ninth centuries BC.

example) the sporadic and partial Iron Age reuse of the Cretan Bronze Age palaces.

Further to the south, the vast area stretching from Spain to Italy and from France to Poland, can reasonably be taken as a whole ('middle Europe'). Although there are regional variations within this area, there are also striking differences between the middle European zone and the areas to the west (the Atlantic system, namely the west coasts of Iberia and France, and the British Isles and Ireland) and the north (the Nordic system). The first common factor is burial practices. Around 1300 BC there was a general shift in middle Europe from inhumation to cremation. After cremation, the ashes were gathered up, placed in an urn, and buried in special cemetery areas. Cremation did not take over completely, and in some regions did not take over at all, but the practice of urn burials is sufficiently widespread to have given the name 'Urnfield' to the whole period from 1300 to 700 BC.

In a few cases, scattered across middle Europe, the cremated remains were marked out by mounds of earth, or even elaborate stone-vaulted chambers, with rich grave goods. These were presumably the remains of major local figures, whose memories were important to their heirs (as at Lefkandi). Although it is possible that the shift to cremation was associated with changes in beliefs about the dead or the afterlife, the body coming to be seen just as a vehicle for higher things, this idea is mere speculation: when the opposite change (from cremation to inhumation) occurs in the well-documented second and third centuries AD it cannot be linked to any changes in belief. The beginnings of urn burials in middle Europe may be just a matter of fashion.

The second main unifying factor in this region is the social organization of the living. Throughout middle Europe, societies seem to have been under the control of warrior leaders. Their prestige can be seen from the fact that huge numbers of bronze weapons were ceremonially, and very lavishly, disposed of, some in graves, and others in ritual deposits. Fighting was the prestige activity of the age, though of course it does not follow that a great deal of actual fighting went on. So prestigious was it that some of the bronze weapons so carefully placed in ritual deposits seem to have been made for show, perhaps for parades as well as for deposit: a flashy beaten bronze breastplate was less effective as protection against sword blows than a simple and much cheaper leather jerkin. The evidence for weaponry is sufficiently rich that we can build up a clear picture both

of what was normal across the area, and also of regional divergences. A typical warrior kit consisted of a bronze helmet, breastplate, greaves, round shield, sword and bronze-tipped spear. Regional variations in this assemblage can be seen in the Danube region, the north-western Alps, western Europe and northern Italy. The differences lie in the precise shape of the helmet, the design of the sword and spearhead, and the decorations on the shield and greaves. The regional differences in armour form part of the evidence for broad regional patterns, though they need not also imply the existence of large regional political powers.

The area was also unified technologically. A neat example of technology transfer within the area comes from glass production. True glass production originated in the Levant, as with the 175 ingots of coloured glass on the Uluburun wreck. Glass of this type found in Europe may have been imported in the form of ingots. Distinct from true glass production is the local production of primitive glass, known as 'faience'. Because it is fired at much lower temperatures than true glass from ingots, faience is much easier to produce. Excavations in northern Italy have found glass beads, crucibles with glass sticking to them, and partially fused glass. Analysis of this Italian glass shows that it was made from local materials, not from supplies imported from the east. It was a highly desirable technology, because it created brightly coloured objects. Because faience was attractive, the technology for making it spread throughout temperate Europe. The technology was small-scale, and used only for making coloured beads, but it was very pervasive.

Bronze-making was the major technology of the period in middle Europe. Alloying copper and tin to make bronze was nothing new in 1300 BC, but the late second millennium BC saw significant technological improvements, and a huge increase in the scale of production. Moulds became more complex, and the lost-wax method of casting was invented. This method, which permits the modelling of much finer details, was later used in the Renaissance by sculptors like Benvenuto Cellini, who left a vivid description of the process in his autobiography. Bronze-workers seem to have moved around a good deal. The hoards of broken bronze objects intended for melting down and reuse must have been carefully buried by migrant bronze-workers, who intended to return and use the metal on another occasion. The movement of these skilled workers also helps to account for the relative homogeneity of style of bronzes over long distances. For example, two bronze burial urns from

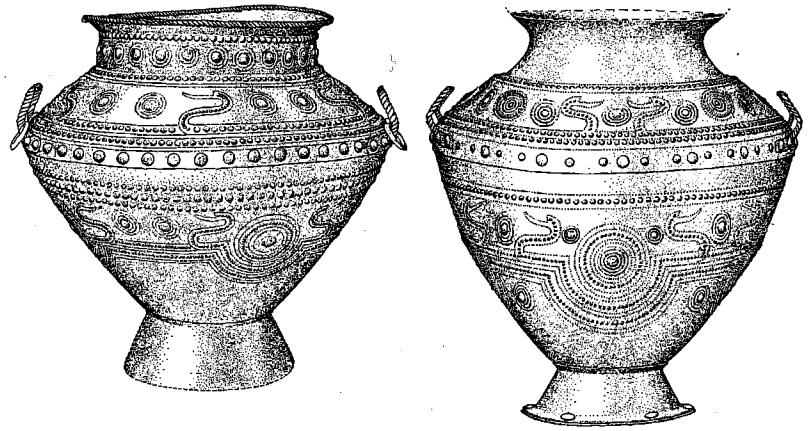


Figure 9. Bronze urns, from Gevelinghausen (north-central Germany) on left and from Veii (in central Italy) on right. Actual height: *c.* 38 centimetres.

north-central Germany and from central Italy are of almost the same size, have very similar shapes, and decorations drawn from the same repertoire (see Figure 9). Not only were funerary practices common across middle Europe, but so too were the objects used in the funerals.

The warrior elites, whose bronze weapons we have examined, stood at the top of the local social pyramid. Their wealth and power rested on their ability to control the production of metals and the passage of goods in their area. Living in the largest settlement, they held sway over fairly small territories, of the order of 150–200 kilometres across. Under them were subordinate elites, living in smaller settlements, and under them individual farms and perhaps twenty to sixty small hamlets; these subordinate elites controlled territories maybe 20–25 kilometres across. In other words, Urnfield societies had complex social and political structures, even if each individual 'state' was on quite a modest scale. The settlements of the warrior elites began to be fortified around 1100 BC, which marks a significant growth in ambition on the part of individual Urnfield societies. In south-west Germany, for example, the settlements were evenly distributed, along the sides of river valleys, 10 to 15 kilometres apart. These fortifications were not just for show: most fortified settlements show signs of destruction at some point in their history. It was becoming increasingly necessary to defend one's home against attacks by one's neighbours.

A good example of a modest, fortified settlement is Sobiejuchy in north-central Poland, a well-excavated site, which can serve as a model for other middle European sites of the period. Sobiejuchy was probably first settled in the late Bronze Age, and continued through into the Iron Age. The site, of modest size (6 hectares), was situated on an island in a lake and was defended by a wooden stockade. The settlement was based on an agricultural subsistence economy. There was intensive cultivation of a range of crops: millet, wheat, spelt, emmer, beans, lentils and peas. Pigs, sheep and horses were reared, and wild animals and fish caught for added protein. Sobiejuchy was typical of other middle European communities in its animal husbandry and in the cultivation of a wider range of crops than in earlier periods. The houses had efficient means of storing grain. Pottery loomweights show that clothes were produced locally, and metal objects too were made here. Houses filled the whole of the inside of the stockade; their plans cannot be recovered, but at a nearby site houses were quite large (9 × 8 metres), with an upper storey.

The cemetery for the community at Sobiejuchy, 500 metres away, has also been excavated. From the number of graves, it has been estimated that about 600 people lived at Sobiejuchy. This means that Sobiejuchy was a substantially larger site than had been normal earlier in the Bronze Age, and is part of the evidence for a general increase in population in middle Europe in the Urnfield period. So there was some growth in scale, but Sobiejuchy remained a basically subsistence settlement, with no imported luxury goods, and with domestic pottery quite unlike that of contemporary sites only 15 kilometres away. In this respect, it was typical of most middle European settlements in the Urnfield period. It was rich in terms of local resources, but not in terms of imports of prestige items. The settlement shows no signs of planning, or of craft specialization, which makes it hard to see Sobiejuchy as a primitive town.

In northern and central Italy also, settlements increased in size during this period. The names given to the periods in central Italy, the region later known as Etruria, imply radical change in the early first millennium BC: late and 'final' Bronze Age (1300–900 BC); and early Iron Age, or Villanovan, named after the type site of Villanova near Bologna (900–700 BC). But in fact developments here, as in middle Europe, were continuous between the Bronze and Iron Ages. In the late Bronze Age settlements consisted of small hamlets, located on naturally defensible

sites. The average size of settlements was a modest 4 to 5 hectares. In the ninth and eighth centuries the number of settlements increased, and the size of the largest settlements in southern Etruria grew dramatically.

One of these sites is the hilltop site of Veii (modern Veio), from whose cemetery comes the bronze funerary urn we saw earlier. Archaeological surface surveys show hamlets scattered across most parts of the hilltop site; these hamlets are increasingly large, and indeed soon reach a scale unprecedented in this area. From them grew the major urban centre of Veii, whose fifth-century fortification walls surrounded an area of 190 hectares. The origins of the later pattern of states known in this area in the seventh and sixth centuries BC can thus clearly be traced back to the early Iron Age; the emergence of centralized states in northern Italy seems to have been an independent local development, unaffected by developments in Greek urbanism in mainland Greece or in southern Italy (described in the next chapter).

The post-Villanovan period in central Italy, from 700 BC, is termed Etruscan. This modern terminology, like the distinction between the final Bronze Age and the Villanovan period, implies a radical break, possibly even the arrival of new migrants. The origin of the Etruscans was already a hotly debated question in antiquity. We do not know what stories the Etruscans themselves told about their origins, but in the fifth century BC the Greek historian Herodotus traced the Etruscans back to the Lydians of western Asia Minor. As a result of a period of sustained famine, claims Herodotus, half the population of Lydia had emigrated to the west, under the leadership of a certain Tyrrhenos. They settled in central Italy, changing their name from Lydians to Tyrrhenians, after the name of their leader.

Although Herodotus' story has had its modern advocates, who have argued that migrants from Asia Minor settled in northern Italy and took over Villanovan settlements in the eighth century BC, it is now clear that this explanation does not work. The language of the Etruscans is hard to classify. It was unique in Italy, and its only 'cousin' was the obscure pre-Greek language of the island of Lemnos in the Aegean; whatever its real origins, it certainly did not derive from Lydian. Archaeologically, there is no sign of destructions, or even attacks, at the end of the Villanovan period, and no sign that the inhabitants of Etruria after 700 BC were different from those living there before 700 BC. Contrary to the story of eastern origins for the Etruscans, it now seems certain that the 'Etruscan' period evolved organically from the Villanovan.

Throughout this long period of evolution among the Urnfield societies of Italy and middle Europe, easterners were beginning to have major impacts on coastal areas of the central and western Mediterranean. In the Second Palace period Minoan and Mycenaean traders had expanded their field of operations westwards to Sicily, Italy and Sardinia. An example of material that came back with them is a sword in the Uluburun wreck, which probably originated in Sicily or southern Italy. After the Second Palace period, Aegean-style pottery continued to be used in the central Mediterranean, but scientific analysis of the clays from which it is made has shown that in the thirteenth century it was produced locally in southern Italy. After the collapse of the Cretan and mainland Greek palaces Aegean craftsmen must have moved to south Italy, either permanently or seasonally, and produced pottery there.

Meanwhile Cypriot traders and craftsmen were also operating in the central Mediterranean, though we do not really understand what they were doing there. In the thirteenth and especially twelfth centuries we can trace close Cypriot contacts with the central Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Sardinia, especially in terms of metallurgy. Large numbers of copper ingots from this period have been found on both islands: on Sardinia they occur at no fewer than twenty-six different Bronze Age sites. Scientific analysis of the lead isotopes in the copper has shown that the Sardinian ingots originated from mines in northern Cyprus, even though Sardinia has its own native sources of copper. In addition, a Cypriot origin can also be demonstrated for various metal-working tools, such as sledgehammers, tongs and charcoal shovels, which have been found on Sardinia. Nonetheless, the bronze figurines produced on Sardinia are of purely local design, depicting warriors and other figures of daily life: shepherds offering sacrifices, wrestlers, musicians, and women nursing children.

Around the same time as these technological imports to Sardinia from the east, native Sardinian settlements were undergoing dramatic changes. More than 4,000, perhaps as many as 7,000, stone-built structures (*nuraghi*) are known on the island. The simplest are just towers, up to 18 metres high, of large stone blocks, not all of local material. Some have outer walls round them, and most stand at the centre of larger settlements. In many parts of the island they are found less than 2 kilometres apart and represent what was probably the most intense land-use in the island's history. Most of the *nuraghi* seem to date to the second half of the second

millennium BC, some continuing in use down into the first millennium. The rapid growth of population implied by the *nuraghi*, combined with the import of sophisticated Cypriot metallurgical techniques, suggests an extraordinary level of prosperity on Sardinia in the last centuries of the second millennium BC.

Both on Sardinia and in other parts of the central-western Mediterranean, there is a gap of four centuries between the trading contacts of the Cypriots in the thirteenth–twelfth centuries BC and the creation of settlements here by Phoenicians and Greeks in the eighth century BC (described in the next chapter). These centuries are now gradually coming into focus. To judge from the finds of Cypriot personal brooches in Sicily, Italy, Sardinia and even in Iberia, Cypriots remained active in the west after the twelfth century, and it is clear that Phoenicians were active in the west well before they founded their first settlements there in the eighth century. We have already glanced at the emergence of Phoenician power in the early Iron Age, and the subsequent eastern and southern expansion of their trading interests in association with King Solomon of Israel. This was followed by a concerted westwards expansion of Phoenician trading interests in the tenth and ninth centuries. Phoenicians built a temple to a Phoenician deity at Nora in southern Sardinia in the ninth century, and a Phoenician tomb near Knossos of the ninth/eighth century included both material from a Phoenician jeweller and a pottery vessel from Sardinia.

Some Phoenicians had probably already reached the western limits of the Mediterranean by the tenth century. From Huelva (ancient Tartessos), on the Atlantic coast of south-west Iberia, comes a wonderful hoard of 400 bronze objects dating to the mid-tenth century BC, including 92 spearheads and 62 spear-butts, 78 swords, 29 daggers, 17 arrowheads, fragments of helmets, 14 buttons, 10 rings, 4 complete safety-pin brooches and 5 necklaces. The objects were found in a river mouth, and are probably what is left of a shipwreck; alternatively, they may be a ritual deposit. Most of the armour was made in the Atlantic coastal region; the swords are characteristic of the Atlantic coast as far north as Britain, and there is also an Irish type of spearhead. The hoard thus exemplifies the intense cultural and trading links along the Atlantic seaboard in this period. But there are also some objects from the eastern Mediterranean: a bronze helmet probably originating in Assyria, and safety-pin brooches of two distinctive types from the eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus and the

Levant. The Huelva hoard illustrates the existence of connections between people from the eastern Mediterranean and the Atlantic trade circuit as early as the tenth century BC. Contacts between the Levant and Tartessos were such that 'ships of Tarshish [that is, Tartessos]' is a standard phrase in the Hebrew Bible for major trading vessels. It was 'ships of Tarshish' that Hiram of Tyre and Solomon of Jerusalem used for their regular expeditions down the Red Sea in search of 'gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks'.

Looking at the very different worlds of middle Europe, the western Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Levant in the first centuries of the first millennium BC, the clearest distinction is not that between east and west, but between the countries to the north and the south of the Alps in this period. Wherever one looks in the Mediterranean world around 800 BC, whether it be Phoenicia, Cyprus, mainland Greece, Sardinia or northern Italy, the signs of economic and political lift-off are there. All of these very different societies were undergoing mass population growth, rapid technological development, and the beginnings of advanced state-formation. North of the Alps, in middle Europe and beyond, there is no sign of anything of the kind. For whatever reason, the Urnfield societies of temperate Europe did not experience the same kind of lift-off as their neighbours to the south. This claim is not the result of cultural prejudice on the part of two authors trained in Greek and Roman history; it is accepted also by archaeologists specializing in middle Europe. The Mediterranean lift-off is not easy to explain, but must be connected with (among other things) the successful intensification of agriculture, which supported increased populations, the emergence of strong community bonds and successful local leadership, and the existence of entrepreneurs, whose trading activities enhanced developments back home. Whatever the precise reasons, this is the moment when the Mediterranean world decisively pulled ahead of Europe north of the Alps. The age of the Mediterranean city-states was about to begin.

3

Greeks, Phoenicians and the Western Mediterranean: 800–480 BC

At the dawn of the eighth century BC, a new town was founded on the west coast of the island of Euboea. The earliest settlers were probably refugees from the Dark Age town of Lefkandi, which had been abandoned in the early eighth century, for reasons unknown. This little settlement, stretching between a fine natural harbour and a naturally defensible acropolis rock facing the Greek mainland, bore the name of Eretria. Here, around 720 BC, a local prince was buried in extraordinary splendour. The dead man's ashes were set in a bronze cauldron, with a second cauldron to serve as a lid; four swords and six spears were buried alongside him. Over the next forty years fifteen more family members were buried around this original tomb, in rich graves adorned with weapons and gold jewellery. For sheer ostentatious display of wealth, no other site in Greece at this period can match this group of Eretrian tombs. But around 680 BC, the series of burials came to an abrupt end. A huge triangular monument was built over the tombs, transforming an active private burial plot into a public cult site. This elite family had passed out of the present-day world of Eretria and become part of its past. A line had been drawn; the age of the *basileis* was at an end. In the eighth and seventh centuries BC individual communities right across the Greek world were beginning the slow process of turning themselves into *poleis*, 'citizen-states'.

The rise of the Greek *polis* will be the central theme of this chapter. After exploring the evidence for the emergence of *poleis* in mainland Greece in the eighth century BC, we shall move on to see how the culture of the Greek world in this period was transformed under the influence of the civilizations of Egypt and the Near East. We shall see how, in turn, this cultural revolution spread to the central and western Mediterranean with the great colonizing movements (both Greek and Phoenician) of