

9 BRONZE AGE EUROPEAN ELITES: FROM THE AEGEAN TO THE ADRIATIC AND BACK AGAIN

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Abstract

In their recent, influential book *The Rise of Bronze Age Society* (2005), Kristiansen and Larsson argued that hierarchical societies formed in Europe during the Bronze Age in response to the spread from the Near East to northern Europe of elite objects and symbols. These were adopted into and transmitted through existing European institutions following identifiable paths. One of these paths traversed the eastern Mediterranean, entering continental Europe via the Aegean and Adriatic seas. In this scenario, the Late Bronze Age Mycenaean states acted as nodes of communication and transfer, shipping ideas and items up the Adriatic coast and onward to central Europe. But there is good evidence that contacts between the Aegean and the eastern Adriatic were at their strongest prior to and immediately following, not during, the Mycenaean period. In order to disentangle the complex patterns of culture contact and transmission that characterized interactions between the eastern Mediterranean and Europe in the Bronze Age, we deploy various theoretical frameworks at different analytical scales. This effort reveals dynamic processes of change and transformation at the local and regional levels, which are helpful in understanding the continental patterns synthesized by Kristiansen and Larsson.

Introduction: *Ex Oriente Lux?*

The European Bronze Age was an exciting, dynamic time: things moved, and people moved too, occasionally, or so it seems. As a result, social, political, and economic institutions were transformed. Institutional change gave rise to new ways of thinking and being, such that hierarchical relationships between individuals and groups became acceptable and formalized.

The transformation of European society at the dawn of the Bronze Age was once thought to be a result of contact with southwestern Asia – the ‘East,’ the primary example of change *ex oriente lux* (e.g., Childe 1925). Trade, of metals in particular, was implicated heavily in the rise of European civilization (e.g., Piggott 1965). Those who controlled access to copper and tin and the production and circulation of bronze, it was assumed, directed the

processes of change. Archaeologists later realized, however, that while control of scarce resources was certainly important to Bronze Age elites, access to new ideas was as significant and equally lucrative. Following Helms (1988; 1993; 1998), Bronze Age elites were thought to have monopolized sacred and symbolic knowledge, not to mention technological know-how, that others did not or could not share. Often this knowledge emanated from outside local systems or from outside the European continent itself. Exotic objects and ideas became sources of cultural capital, media mixed with messages, hybrid vehicles for a new social order.

Given the above, archaeologists were forced to (re)consider the nature of culture contact and change in Bronze Age Europe and in general (Parkinson and Galaty 2009). What motivated these very different societies to interact? What did people in the East want with Europeans, and *vice versa*? The contacts that did take place occurred, apparently, across wide expanses of space and over long periods of time, so how were they sustained? Convincing answers to these questions were found when concepts from world-systems theory (Wallerstein 1974) were coupled with notions of temporality derived from the *Annales* school (Braudel 1966) and applied to Mediterranean archaeological data sets. The Mediterranean Sea and the rivers flowing into it were seen as a complex network supporting a world-system that developed over time and linked diverse cultures from the Near East to northern Europe, connecting center to periphery (Rowlands *et al.* 1987) (Figure 9.1). In world-systems terms, the eastern core states were thought to have extracted raw materials from the European periphery via semi-peripheral Mediterranean interlocutors, such as the Minoan and Mycenaean states, which received prestige goods and knowledge, as described above, in return (Sherratt 1994). Because elites living in each subsystem, in very different cultural contexts, interfaced with the larger system in very different ways, relationships between them developed in variable fashion, at different spatial and temporal scales (Knapp and Blake 2005). Exchange systems ran the gamut from independent and temporary to commercial and sustained (Galaty *et al.* 2009). Some exchanges were understood to be private and personal, made



FIGURE 9.1. Map of Mediterranean Europe with regions mentioned in the text. Produced by J. Seagard, The Field Museum, Chicago, for the authors.

between individuals, whereas others were public affairs of state. In *Annales* terms, the former occurred at the chronological scale of *événements*, whereas the latter might create *conjunctures*, shaping regional histories across generations (Bintliff 1991; Knapp 1992). In both cases, the *mentalités*, of those living on the periphery in particular, were challenged and shaped.

The world-systems/*annaliste* model of European prehistory, however, did not go unquestioned. Many archaeologists wondered whether relationships of dependency between core and periphery, which seemed necessary

to a functioning world-system, could have developed in prehistory (e.g., Stein 1999). Others thought that world-systems theory was, in fact, too inflexible, leaving too little room for human agency to be useful (e.g., Kohl 2008). In response, world-systems analysts have modified general world-systems theory so that it works in specific, noncapitalist prehistoric contexts (Kardulias 2009). Hall (1986; 1998a; 1998b; 2000; 2001), for example, has amended Wallerstein's concept of incorporation, the process whereby marginal societies are integrated into a world-system, such that the relationship between core

and periphery is not always, or purely, one of dependency. In prehistoric times, when cores were separated from peripheries by great, seemingly insurmountable, distances, individuals living in both zones likely met as equals, 'brother to brother' as it were, rather than sovereign to subject. Kardulias (2007a), citing examples from Cyprus and North America, calls this phenomenon 'negotiated peripherality,' whereby elites on the periphery dictated the terms of their own, often willing, incorporation into an encroaching world-system. These adjustments to world-systems theory follow much recent historical and archaeological scholarship on frontier societies, which reveals that frontiers were loci of active cultural production, and that materials and ideas flowed across borders in both directions, from core to periphery and *vice versa*, as well (e.g., Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Parker and Rodseth 2005; Schon and Galaty 2006).

Bronze Age European Elites: A New Synthesis

Much of this new thinking on cultural interaction informs the work of Kristiansen and Larsson's (2005) book *The Rise of Bronze Age Society*. For them, Bronze Age Europe was marked not by separation from the Mediterranean world-system, nor by any degree of dependency in its relationship to distant states. In their view, Europe and the Mediterranean together comprised a giant, networked whole, with permeable boundaries, across which individuals, warrior elites in particular, passed at will. There was a Bronze Age world-system, but Kristiansen and Larsson have decentered it, allowing Bronze Age Europeans to 'negotiate' their 'peripherality' in numerous, creative, ultimately transformative ways. And yet, in *The Rise of Bronze Age Society* culture change still, by and large, flows *ex oriente*. Arrows on maps point west and north. One wonders if these authors have returned whence Childe began (see Nordquist and Whittaker 2007; and cf. Kristiansen and Larsson 2007).

The Rise of Bronze Age Society is a work of *synthesis*, not *analysis*. We use these terms in their literal sense, the 'putting together' rather than 'breaking apart' of a system into its constituent parts. As a work of synthesis, Kristiansen and Larsson's model of the European Bronze Age is inherently deductive; it encourages argument from the general to the particular. Since their primary goal, however, was to explain social interaction at the continental scale and over the long term, the model should not be expected to work perfectly in every region, in all localities, throughout Europe. Rather we should expect variation in regional and local patterns of interaction, and these can be used to refine the more general model (Parkinson and

Galaty 2009; Yerkes *et al.* 2009). Our aim in this paper is not to pick apart Kristiansen and Larsson's synthesis by pointing out exceptions and inconsistencies, which are inherent in any work of synthesis. Instead, we take the opportunity to examine the various ways in which regional and local histories reacted to and were shaped by the macro-scalar patterns of interaction they describe. Specifically, we analyze archaeological data collected along a route of Bronze Age interaction that tied the Aegean to central Europe via the eastern Adriatic coast.

Bronze Age European Elites: A New Analysis

Despite recent emphasis on the Neolithic (e.g., Hodder 1990; Perlès 2001), no scholar familiar with the European Bronze Age would dispute that significant political, economic, and ideological changes occurred during the period. The more formative transformation occurred during the Bronze Age, creating the conditions necessary to the rise of the hierarchical proto-states of 'barbarian' Europe (Thurston 2009). Furthermore, there is little doubt that the Bronze Age transformation had something to do with more interaction across broader geographic areas, including southwest Asia, as compared to earlier periods. This increased interaction is indicated and probably also caused by the extensive trade in metals, but was also stimulated by other factors, such as the widespread adoption of the domestic horse and wheeled transport (Anthony 2007). What remains unclear is the extent to which changes in Bronze Age social complexity were spurred by contacts with the Near East, and the means by which social concepts were transmitted across these large areas. Kristiansen and Larsson have built an explicit model that implicates a clear geographic tendency (east to west) and identifies mechanisms (the movement of objects, ideas, and individuals) for how this interaction occurred.

The tendency to envision interaction as primarily one way (east to west) and driven by exchange can be attributed to traditional archaeological models that relied almost exclusively on comparative, regional ceramic typologies. These were developed prior to the widespread use of absolute dating methods such as radiocarbon. Similarities between artifact types and assemblages were used as indicators of both chronology and interaction. Synchronicity was taken for granted, and the direction of interaction was assumed. Despite the impact of the radiocarbon revolution, several typological models that were developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century continue to exercise undue influence on thinking about how people interacted during prehistory.

Considered within an absolute chronological framework, and when regional and local data sets are brought to bear, the picture sketched by Kristiansen and Larsson begins to look very different (Table 9.1). The patterns that emerge at regional and local scales indicate strong links between the Aegean and the northeast Adriatic in the earlier Bronze Age, very weak links during the Mycenaean period, and a major shift at the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age, beginning in 1200 BC. They reaffirm the (relatively) new vision of European prehistory, Mediterranean prehistory in particular, sketched above, which emphasizes the scalar effects of interaction over shifting distances, across different lengths of time, and involving individuals embedded in and operating through very different sociopolitical structures (Parkinson and Galaty 2007).

Careful study of regional and local archaeological records, from Greece to Europe via the Adriatic, suggests that some aspects of Kristiansen and Larsson's model need to be refined. When their synthesis is analyzed, i.e., split into its constituent parts, the Mediterranean system of prehistoric interaction seems anything but unidirectional and static. Rather, change flowed in multiple directions at variable rates through time as a function of geography and human agency. During the earlier periods of the Bronze Age, for example, objects and ideas flowed south along the eastern Adriatic coast, influencing the rise of the Mycenaean states in multiple, important ways. This pattern was reestablished at the end of the Bronze Age, following the Mycenaean collapse. The Late Bronze Age collapse was not triggered by this process, but the disappearance of the Mycenaean states certainly opened up spaces – literally and figuratively, in the form of vacant territories and receptive minds – for northerners to reverse-‘colonize’ the Aegean. People may have moved, but even more importantly, new ideas were transferred south and Greek landscapes and *mentalités* were transformed.

The recent, modified version of world-systems theory described above (Kardulias 2009), highlighting ‘negotiated peripherality’ and cultural exchange and production in frontier zones, provides a useful interpretive context for our patterns. Yet, there are at least two additional theoretical strands that can be drawn into our analysis, lending further interpretive support. These are, broadly speaking, postcolonial theory (culture contact and hybridization practices in particular) and cultural transmission theory, both of which archaeologists have applied recently to prehistoric data sets.

In our region of study, colonies (i.e., *apoikiai*) did not become common until the late Iron Age, established by Greeks at places like Apollonia in central Albania during the seventh–sixth century BC (Stocker and Davis 2006), and Issa and Pharos (on the islands of Vis and

Hvar respectively) in Dalmatia during the fourth century BC (Gaffney *et al.* 1997; see also Milićević Bradač 2007). Nevertheless, colonial outposts, so-called ‘gateway’ communities (Hirth 1978), were established by the Mycenaeans at points north, in Epirus for example (Tartaron 2004), and so colonial interactions most probably did occur there during the Bronze Age. The larger, more important issue here, however, concerns the postcolonial corrective to archaeological method, which depends on the work of postmodernist scholars such as Said (1978). In particular, postcolonial archaeologists call for the promotion and systematic investigation of local archaeologies as one means of ‘decolonizing’ them (Gosden 2004: 17–18). We, too, apply Said (1978), but we turn him on his head, arguing that ‘Occidentalism’ has exerted undue influence on archaeological discourse concerning the relationship of prehistoric Europe to the East. Adriatic societies, for example, did not experience dependent, colonial interactions with semi-peripheral states, such as the Mycenaeans (Tomas 2009). Rather, all Mediterranean prehistoric societies, including those in the Adriatic, were hybridized products of complex interactions, including but not limited to the appropriation of material culture, that were only very rarely truly colonial.

To interact is human, and in prehistoric Europe, interaction often took place for interaction's sake, not only or simply as a by-product of colonialism. In fact, hybridization itself may be the desired goal, and the sexual overtones in hybridization theory are real and intended (Young 1995). A good example of culture contact, appropriation, and hybridization practices in the Mediterranean can be drawn from Wengrow's (2009) recent analysis of Prepalatial Crete. He has demonstrated that many of the early contacts between Crete and Egypt probably were made between Cretan women and eastern Mediterranean sailors who peddled exotic preciosities – such as scarabs and stone bowls – that appealed to feminine tastes and ritual needs. Hybrid cultural practices and, perhaps, marriages were the result.

Some archaeologists who apply culture contact theory put a surprisingly strong Darwinian spin on the nature of interactions (see examples in Cusick 1998). For instance, Turchin and Hall (2003) have made the rather interesting case, based on research in population ecology, that new cultural forms (i.e., ‘hybrids’), just like new species, most often appear at the dynamic edges of territories (i.e., ‘frontiers’), where ideas, along with genes, are most likely swapped and recombined in new ways. This being the case, we also can profitably employ cultural transmission theory in our analysis of Mediterranean–European interaction, in particular in our interpretation of archaeological data collected from the fringes of overlapping interaction

TABLE 9.1. Bronze Age Chronology for Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean (all dates are approximate and in calibrated years BC).

	Northern Europe^a	
Period IV/V	1040–760	
Period III	1440–1040	
Period II	1500–1250	
Period I	1730–1510	
Late Neolithic II	1920–1730	
	Central Europe^a	
Hallstatt B2/3	1050–750	
Hallstatt B1	1100–1000	
Hallstatt A	1250–1050	
Bronze D	1400–1200	
Tumulus Bronze Age (Bronze B–C)	1500–1300	
Bodman/Schachen, Zürich-Mozartstrasse (Bronze A2)	1950–1500	
Singen (Bronze A1)	2200–1950	
Bell Beaker/Corded Ware	3000–2000	
Copper Age	4500–3000	
	Eastern Adriatic and Central Balkans^b	
Late Bronze Age	1300–700	
Middle Bronze Age	1600–1300	
Early Bronze Age	2400/2200–1600	
Chalcolithic	3500–2400/2200	
	Crete^c	Mainland Greece^c
	<i>Minoan</i>	<i>Helladic</i>
Late Bronze III	1390–1070 (Mycenaean)	1390–1070 (developed palaces)
Late Bronze I–II	1600–1390 (Neopalatial)	1600–1390
Middle	2100–1600 (Protopalatial)	2000–1600
Early	3100–2100 (Prepalatial)	3100–2000
Neolithic	6800–3100	7000–3100
	Egypt^d	
New Kingdom	1600–1100	
Middle Kingdom	2000–1600	
Old Kingdom	2300–2000	
Archaic	2800–2300	
Hierakonpolis	ca. 3000 (expansion and consolidation)	
Predynastic	3300–3000 (formative)	
Neolithic	5000–3300	
	Anatolia^e	
Hittite Empire	1400/1350–1180 (expansion and consolidation)	
Old Kingdom	1650/1600–1400/1350 (incorporation)	
Hattian Occupation	2000–1700 (formative, Assyrian trading colonies)	
Early Bronze Age	3000–2000	
Chalcolithic	5200–3000	
Neolithic	7000–5200	
	Syro-Palestine^e	
Late Bronze Age	1400–1200 (incorporation)	
Middle Bronze Age	2000–1400 (formative, Assyrian trading colonies)	
Early Bronze Age	3000–2000	
Chalcolithic	4200–3400	
Neolithic	7000–4200	

^a Adapted from Harding 2000.

^b Adapted from Dimitrijević *et al.* 1998.

^c Adapted from Tartaron 2008.

^d Adapted from Savage 2001.

^e Wilkinson 2003; Bryce 2005.

spheres that spanned the Aegean, the Adriatic, and central Europe.

Cultural transmission theory holds that ‘modal’ human behaviors are learned and conveyed from one generation to the next through ‘conformist transmission’ as opposed to ‘perfect duplication’ (Bettinger 2008: 2–3). The latter, if employed, would pass along the bad, maladaptive behaviors along with the good, whereas in conformist transmission, individuals adopt those behaviors that seem to ‘work’ (are tried and tested) and disregard those that do not. New behavioral traits may be introduced through individual innovation, or as one result of culture contact. Conformist transmission makes it unlikely that most new behaviors, whether innovative or introduced, will survive because copying is a safe and inexpensive strategy (Bettinger 2008: 3). But in situations of change, such as might result from contact and incorporation, cultures must adjust, and so the advantage passes to individuals who are ‘learners.’ Faithful copying is therefore important to cultural survival but is not enough to ensure long-term adaptability. In every culture, there must exist a mix of copiers and learners.

The importance of cultural transmission theory to our analysis becomes apparent when it is inserted into the theoretical framework we constructed above for prehistoric Europe. In a world-systems context where cultures interacted across variable distances and rates of time, through multiple frontier zones, in which individuals possessed agency that they may not ordinarily have possessed, ‘learners’ gained great power. Such individuals managed to bend the transmission process to their advantage in ways that Helms (1988; 1993; 1998) predicts generally and Kristiansen and Larsson (2005) describe specifically. Learners did not have to reproduce and share faithfully knowledge they had acquired from outside sources, symbolic knowledge in particular. Rather, such knowledge became for Bronze Age elites a currency they, and they alone, could obtain and dispense. This kind of ‘selective’ duplication, which introduced some foreign traits and not others, often warping those that were introduced, led to rampant appropriation of material culture and, in some cases where contact was sustained and intense, hybridization, a potentially valuable and desirable quality in and of itself.

Things became really interesting, however, when during the course of the Bronze Age, novel behaviors were transformed into modal behaviors and made subject to conformist transmission. When this happened, hybridized material culture and practices began to spread, through parent cultures at first and then later across cultural boundaries. In situations of culture contact and change, in particular when negotiated peripherality proved possible, new hybrid practices, and peoples, that had formed in frontier zones might reverse-colonize semi-peripheral and

core regions, leading to culture change as described above. This is what we assert happened in Europe at the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age. But if this process is to be understood, it must be studied on the ground, at multiple chronological and spatial scales. In this chapter, we therefore present Bronze and Iron Age archaeological data from our study region, much of which is not easily accessible to most archaeologists. We consider it in its local context, integrate it across time and through space, and use it to amend Kristiansen and Larsson’s general model of culture contact and change.

Modeling Interaction: From the Aegean to the Adriatic and Back Again

The Aegean

Archaeologists have long recognized that networks of exchange bound Mediterranean to European societies and *vice versa*, and that regional interaction was a key causal factor in Bronze Age sociopolitical change, such as the rise of Aegean states (e.g., Renfrew 1972) (Figure 9.2). Given the importance of exchange, various scholars sought to reconstruct patterns of trade, but they also addressed the mechanisms whereby exchange relationships were enacted and maintained (e.g., Renfrew 1975). Some Bronze Age trade was informal, and exotic goods moved via down-the-line transactions, but much was direct and sustained, linking settlement to settlement across regions. The Bronze Age economy therefore seemed well suited to world-systems analysis (e.g., Frank 1993; Kardulias 1996; Berg 1999). Interaction between Crete and, later, the Greek mainland, on the one hand, and Egypt and various Near Eastern states, on the other, was thought to have stimulated core-periphery relationships that bound the former to the latter. Just what the interacting parties gained through these transactions remains a point of debate. Some archaeologists argue that the Aegean states operated at the margins of the Mediterranean world-system (e.g., Sherratt 2009), in ‘Potemkin’ fashion (Sherratt 2001), or are skeptical that a prehistoric Mediterranean world-system, in the strict sense of the term, even existed (e.g., Cherry 2009). Others believe that the Aegean states were important (e.g., Kardulias 2009) perhaps even major (e.g., Cline 2009) players. To our way of thinking, however, this debate, wrapped tightly around world-systems theory, only works at the very broadest of spatial and temporal scales, as the protagonists readily admit. If we zoom in on smaller micro-regions and tighten our chronological scope, interesting patterns emerge, which shed



FIGURE 9.2. Map of the Aegean with sites mentioned in the text. Produced by J. Seagard, The Field Museum, Chicago, for the authors.

general anthropological light on how individuals and their institutions negotiated culture contact in marginal, sometimes frontier, zones.

Some Aegean archaeologists have found the ‘small worlds’ approach to be very useful (see Brooks *et al.* 2008, on ‘microhistory’ generally). Broodbank (2000; 2013), for example, has analyzed the ‘small world’ of the Bronze Age Cyclades. Using network analysis, he demonstrated that inter-island exchange relationships were necessary to the rise of complex societies in the archipelago during the Early Bronze Age (beginning ca. 3000 BC). More recently, Knappett *et al.* (2008; see also Knappett 2011) applied a more sophisticated form of network analysis – based on mathematical models of gravity that allow for ‘imperfect optimization’ – to the Middle Bronze Age southern Aegean, including the Cyclades. They determined that the south Aegean network, including sites on Crete, various Cycladic islands, and the Greek mainland, were prone to ‘homophily’: settlements of similar type were attracted to one another, forming distinct micro-regional interaction zones (Knappett *et al.* 2008: 1018). They also found, however, that some sites managed to fill high rank positions in the overall network, bridging micro-regions, despite their

relatively small size. Knappett *et al.* (2008: 1021) argue that these anomalous sites were ‘gateway’ communities that controlled key exchange nodes, attracting and funneling intra- and extra-regional trade. One of these sites was Akrotiri on Thera, which was buried in the island’s volcanic eruption sometime in the seventeenth century BC. Akrotiri, albeit a relatively small site, played an oversized role in the larger network (Knappett *et al.* 2008: 1020–21). It may have been a Minoan ‘colony’ and was a key first step in the western string of island settlements that lead from Crete and, ultimately, to the Greek mainland and the mines of Lavrion (Davis 1979). Akrotiri was also a hotbed of hybridization practices, a place where Cycladic and Minoan peoples mixed and mingled.

Only recently have archaeologists applied the ‘small world’ approach to the mainland of Greece. Pullen and Tartaron (2007; see also Tartaron 2013), for example, treat the Saronic Gulf as a small world, anchored through the early portions of the Bronze Age by the precocious proto-state at Kolonna on Aegina. Kolonna appears to have monitored the mainland’s access to Crete and the wider Mediterranean via the western string. In fact, the purported Minoan colony on Kythera may have given Crete

back-door access to the Greek mainland, avoiding Kolonna altogether (Broodbank and Kiriati 2007; cf. Pullen and Tartaron 2007: 156). Kolonna was a gateway community, but given its distance from Crete and its strategic position, it did not interact with the Minoan states, Knossos in particular, in the same way Thera and Kythera did. On Aegina, as opposed to Thera and Kythera, there was more room for negotiated peripherality. Kolonna sat in a frontier zone, where three different interaction spheres – the Greek mainland, Cycladic, and Minoan – collided. According to Pullen and Tartaron (2007: 156–57), Aegina's Saronic hegemony came to an abrupt end with the rise of Mycenae and the establishment of a Mycenaean community at Korphos on the western shore of the gulf at the start of the Late Bronze Age, ca. 1600 BC. Korphos may have disrupted the Saronic network, tipping the system away from Kolonna and toward a rising power, Mycenae, that possessed its own, direct access to Minoan and wider trade routes.

The above Aegean machinations, involving Knossos, Mycenae, and Kolonna, all of which are tied to culture contact and interaction, retain a distinctly world-systemic flavor: macro-economic, substantivist, and unfolding over the *longue durée* (cf. Chase-Dunn and Mann 1998). World-systems theory also flavors archaeological analyses of Mycenaean interactions in the 'heartland,' i.e., the Peloponnesus. Based on an analysis of obsidian artifacts, which in the Aegean must have been imported from the island of Melos, Kardulias (2007b) has argued that as early as the Early Bronze Age 'gateway' communities in the southern Argolid regulated access to obsidian. According to him (Kardulias 2007b: 111–13), obsidian exchange could not be controlled by Mycenaean elites for a variety of reasons, and was therefore not subject to world-systems cycles as was, for instance, foreign international trade.

Parkinson (2007) identified an identical pattern in Messenia, where obsidian was distributed from the coastal site of Romanou to all other sites in the region, including Pylos. Extra-local interaction thereby affected Mycenaean 'domestic' economies and sociopolitical organization in various ways and at multiple scales, over the long term – obsidian had been mined at Melos since at least the Upper Paleolithic (Torrence 1986) – but also over the short term, as *événements* and *conjonctures* that occurred and evolved within the 100-year life-span of the Mycenaean palaces (Schon 2009). Wright (2004) has argued that certain sites were linked to Mycenaean palaces in systems of mutual dependency and that these sites tended to grow and flourish during the palace period. Such a relationship likely linked Romanou to Pylos (Galaty and Parkinson 2007: 12–13). Thus, world-systems effects relating to interaction and control of trade shaped Mycenaean peoples at both regional and local scales, over long and short spans

of time. This is perhaps to be expected if we think of the Mycenaean states as semi-peripheral intermediaries that brokered European trade with Minoan and eastern Mediterranean states. But what about the situation on the northern Mycenaean border where those European trade relationships were forged?

Feuer (1999; 2003) has argued that the Mycenaean periphery ran across northern Greece from Thessaly to Epirus. Points along and north of this boundary only marginally engaged the Mycenaean states, and *vice versa*. Several archaeologists, however, have challenged Feuer. Based on excavations conducted at Dimini, which revealed a Mycenaean megaron and settlement, and recent surveys in the vicinity of the Pagasetic Gulf, Adrimi-Sismani (2007) has argued that Thessaly was well integrated into the Mycenaean world-system. Dimini, which Adrimi-Sismani (2007: 159–60) equates with Homeric Iolkos, may have acted as a Mycenaean 'gateway' to the Thessalian plain, and thence west to southern Albania and Epirus. Likewise, Mycenaean outposts in the northern Sporades (Adrimi-Sismani 2007: 160–61) and on the island of Thasos (Mee 2008: 370) allowed access to Macedonia and Thrace, and via rivers like the Vardar and Maritza, to the Balkan interior (Mitrevski 1999). As compared to Thessaly, the Mycenaean presence in northwest Greece is less well attested. The mountainous regions of Acarnania and Aetolia appear to have been only lightly settled during Mycenaean times (Boomelje and Doorn 1987), but there is growing evidence for contacts between western coastal Greece and Italy (Ridgway 2006), perhaps via Mycenaean settlements in the Ionian islands (Souyouzoglou-Haywood 2000), possible location of Odysseus's home, Ithaka.

Tartaron (2004; 2005; see also Tartaron and Zachos 1999) has made the compelling case that the site of Glykys Limin, located in Epirus near Preveza, was a Mycenaean outpost. It is associated with a small tholos tomb and modest amounts of Mycenaean and 'Mycenaeanizing' pottery. Given the lithic assemblage, the residents may have processed and exported hides. Whether the occupants of Epirus (i.e., northwestern Greece and southern Albania) were ethnically 'Mycenaean' (i.e., Greek speakers) is unclear, but this seems unlikely given the region's later history. How they reacted to Mycenaean contacts is equally unclear. Here, we reach the limits of the Mycenaean world, and world-systems theory, and encounter processes of culture contact that are best modeled through time on the local scale.

The Adriatic

The Bronze Age states of the northeastern Peloponnesus, including Mycenae itself, were situated to control trade



FIGURE 9.3. Map of the eastern Adriatic coast with sites mentioned in the text. Produced by J. Seagard, The Field Museum, Chicago, for the authors.

north from the Argolic Gulf to the Corinthian Gulf and onward to the Adriatic. Pylos in Messenia is likewise positioned to intercept ships coming from western Crete as they rounded the cape. Some of these ships made for Mycenaean ports in Italy, in the Aeolian Islands and in Apulia (Jones *et al.* 2002), but others may have continued up the coast toward the Adriatic via the Ionian Sea. The Adriatic provided one point of access to central Europe via the *Caput Adriae* (Teržan 2007). Another was via the northern Aegean, as described above. Here, we

focus on the Adriatic route, along the eastern shore specifically (Figure 9.3). This region, which encompasses Albania and several states of the former Yugoslavia, is poorly known by most foreign archaeologists; it appears as a blank spot on many maps of European prehistoric archaeology. But it would have been a key possible route of trade and interaction, linking the Aegean to Europe throughout prehistory. It therefore represents an ideal testing ground for Kristiansen and Larsson's (2005) model.

That the Mycenaean and their predecessors had some kind of contact with Balkan and European peoples is indisputable. Baltic amber reached the Aegean in large quantities during the Bronze Age, presumably by way of the Adriatic but also, perhaps, across the Balkan peninsula (Palavestra 2007). It has been suggested that the 15 kg of gold found in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, including 28 solid-gold vessels, were imported from Transylvania (Davis 1983; but see Vavelidis and Andreou 2008). And Balkan artifacts were found on the Uluburun ship, which wrecked around 1300 BC, including a 'Danubian-style' sword and a possibly Bulgarian stone ceremonial mace-ax (Pulak 1997). Clearly, Aegean Bronze Age elites were interested in prestige goods and materials of Balkan and European origin, but what did the northerners gain through these transactions? Here, we may use Albania as an example.

Albania

Numerous Bronze Age artifacts of purported Aegean derivation have been found in Albania (see reviews by Bejko 1993; 1994; 2002). The majority of these artifacts are metal. Most are weapons – swords, daggers, knives, and spearheads – that date primarily to the Middle and early Late Bronze Age (roughly Middle Helladic I to Late Helladic IIa, although an Italian-style dagger from the tumulus at Vajzë may date to the Early Bronze Age; Bejko 1994: 116). Nearly all were recovered from mortuary contexts, from tumuli in particular. Some of these are associated with Grey Minyan pottery that dates to the Middle Bronze Age, ca. 1800–1600 BC (Bejko 1994: 111–12). Very little certain Mycenaean (or 'Mycenaeanizing') pottery has been found in Albania, despite years of excavation and several recent full-coverage, intensive regional surveys; almost all of it comes from tumuli. What pottery has been found is usually very late Mycenaean, Late Helladic IIIC and later (Bejko 1993; 1994: 122–23).

There is thus an interesting shift in the Aegean–Albanian trade relationship that occurs at the start of the Mycenaean period. It seems quite likely that early Aegean traders worked their way north from Ionian bases and that they were after copper ores, of which there are numerous sources in Albania (Galaty 2007). Tumuli with Aegean metal artifacts are found clustered in populated areas near the coast and in regions near ore sources, such as Korçë (Bejko 1994: 105) and Mati (Lafe and Galaty 2009: 108). Access to Aegean weapons appears to have dwindled when the Mycenaean fully entered the eastern Mediterranean world-system at the start of Late Helladic III. When trade connections between Greece and Albania were reestablished in the late or perhaps sub-Mycenaean phase, it was fine, painted pottery that was imported, not weapons.

Bronze Age proto-'Illyrians' appear to have lived in trans-egalitarian societies, led by warrior chieftains, and one source of their power may have been their ability, à la Helms, to attract and maintain trade relations with their southern Greek neighbors. But they appear to have experienced almost no culture change through such contact. There are no hybridized features extant in Bronze Age Albanian material culture. There was some appropriation of Mycenaean prestige goods – i.e., finished metal objects, such as swords and daggers – but not the symbols or ideas relating to hierarchy and state-level political institutions. Illyrian chiefs were involved in trade and benefited from it, but were not transformed by it. When access to Aegean weapons ended, nothing changed.

When it comes to paths whereby elite institutions (e.g., the warrior king; Kristiansen and Larsson 2005: 88) were passed north from the eastern Mediterranean by way of the Aegean to Europe, Albania was a broken link. We must jump north along the eastern Adriatic coast several hundred miles before we find a fortified Bronze Age site, Monkodonja in Istria, that bears any resemblance whatsoever to an Aegean citadel (Figure 9.4). According to Kristiansen and Larsson (2005: 162), Monkodonja indicates 'an early phase of east Mediterranean colonization in the Adriatic region.' So what of the Istrian and Dalmatian coast? Were models of eastern Mediterranean aristocracy passed north along the Dalmatian coast, having skipped Albania? Or did they reach Monkodonja and points further afield by alternate routes, if at all?

Istria and Dalmatia

There are numerous potential problems with regard to treating Monkodonja as an Aegean Bronze Age colony. The main one is chronological. In their earlier publications, the excavators of Monkodonja speculated about possible Mycenaean involvement in the construction of the settlement. This was based on its complex architectural features and small fragments of imported pottery that were described initially as 'Mycenaean,' but without more specific attributions (Mihovilić *et al.* 2002: 50; 2005: 403). More recent publications, however, find a more suitable comparison for the Monkodonja fortifications and their complex entrance system with the eighth phase of the town at Kolonna (Stadt VIII) on Aegina (Hänsel 2007: 153, n. 22, pl. XXXIIIb; Mihovilić *et al.* 2005: 398). According to Walter and Felten (1981: 10), Kolonna Stadt VIII is dated between 1900–1800 BC (the transition from Middle Helladic I–II) (Wild *et al.* 2010: 1020), which significantly predates the beginning of the Mycenaean culture, especially the period of their expansion to the northern Adriatic (Marazzi 2003). In fact, recently acquired radiocarbon dates from Monkodonja confirm that the fortifications

FIGURE 9.4. The walls of Monkodonja. Courtesy of the Archives of the Archaeological Museum of Istria, Pula, Croatia, 2008. Photograph by B. Hänsel.



were built in the period that corresponds to the Middle rather than Late Helladic (Hänsel *et al.* 2007).

Once we remove the possibility of specific Mycenaean influences at Monkodonja, there is very little left to tie the site to the Late Bronze Age Aegean. The number of foreign finds, especially those that point southward, is small. These include clay tripods that have been compared to those from Crete and Cyprus; a small bronze knife thought to show Aegean links (even though its small size precludes establishing certain Aegean affinities); and bones of animals that appear to have been brought from the south (Hänsel and Teržan 1999: 87–89, 95–96; see Hänsel and Teržan 2000 for a German version of the same paper). Nevertheless, Hänsel (2002: 84–86, 89, 97) believes Monkodonja was a focal Adriatic intermediary in maritime trade between the Aegean and the north. If this interpretation were correct, however, one would expect to find much more foreign material at the site. In any case, the lack of persuasive Mycenaean artifacts at Monkodonja, or anywhere else along the eastern Adriatic coast north of Albania (see Tomas 2005; 2009), speaks against the possibility that Late Bronze Age outposts served to channel Aegean material and ideas to central Europe along this route.

As was the case with Albania, there is much more evidence for contact between Dalmatia and the Aegean during the earlier phases of the Bronze Age. If we concentrate

on the Early Helladic period, for example, we see that it is precisely Early Helladic III Kolonna (Niemeier 1995) and a number of other Early Helladic III Greek sites (see below) that show more abundant evidence for contact with the eastern Adriatic. A major portion of the eastern Adriatic area was at that time occupied by the Cetina culture (Figure 9.5), which in terms of foreign trade represents the region's Bronze Age apogee (Maran 2007: 15–18).

Bronze objects have been discovered in a number of Cetina tumuli. Most probably these were obtained through trade, and the lack of evidence for metal production at Cetina sites suggests that they were imported as finished products (Marović and Čović 1983: 217). Decorated bronze daggers are the most elaborate metal objects found, though simpler forms are also known, of which the most significant is a knife from the site of Bitelić. It has been compared to a knife from Sesklo (Marović and Čović 1983: 207, pl. 33/7), although Albanian parallels have been proposed as well (Govedarica 1989:172). The chance find of a collection of gold items from Nin-Privlaka is also significant for examining Aegean connections. It includes biconical necklace beads similar to those from Tumulus R 26 at Steno in Leukas, Troy IIg, and Poliochni, and golden bands compared to the Early Minoan II–III finds from the Mochlos and Platanos cemeteries in Crete (Vinski 1959: 210–11; Tomas 2011). The construction of the Steno tumuli at Leukas, as well as of some tumuli in the western



FIGURE 9.5. Kotorac-type vessel of the Cetina culture. From Dimitrijević *et al.* 1998: 176, with permission of the authors.

Peloponnese, has been compared to that of early Cetina tumuli (Govedarica 1989: 125–26, 217). Given the later date of most Greek tumuli, it seems highly likely that this burial tradition spread north to south from the Balkans to Greece (Müller-Celka 2007).

In addition to the metal examples discussed above, finds of Cetina pottery in Greece have been taken to indicate maritime trade between the Aegean and the Adriatic (Marović and Čović 1983: 207). Cetina pottery is distinguished by its rich decoration. Perhaps its elaborate appearance was the reason why it had a wide distribution: associated groups have been found in Albania and along the Italian and northern Adriatic coasts, but also as far away as Malta, the Peloponnese, and the Saronic Gulf (Govedarica 1989: 132, 142–44; Nicolis 2005: 534–35; Maran 2007: pl. IIIb; Borgna and Càssola Guida 2009). Among the many significant finds of this pottery at Greek sites, such as Kolonna, Korakou, Lerna, Mycenae, Prosymna, Tiryns, Tsoungiza, and Zygouries, the material from the Altis in Olympia is considered crucial. Here, in addition to imported Cetina pottery, local Grey Minyan ware imitated Cetina styles of decoration (Rambach 2007: 86).

The abundance of Cetina pottery in the Aegean provides good evidence for some type of regular exchange. In fact, it has been suggested that at least some of the above-

mentioned Greek sites were part of a network of trading posts established by Cetina people along the coast of the eastern Adriatic, then across the Ionian islands and the Peloponnese to the vibrant trading system of the Aegean Sea (Maran 2007: 16; Rambach 2007: 86). If this were so, then the Cetina culture constitutes a unique east Adriatic example of regular Bronze Age contacts with the Aegean. Present evidence suggests that it was through such trade that Cetina people acquired precious metal objects from the Aegean, most of which were found in burial contexts, suggesting that just as in Middle and Late Bronze Age Albania, they were used to enhance the social status of the deceased.

Good examples of this process come from three tumuli with luxurious grave goods found along the Montenegrin part of the eastern Adriatic, south of the Cetina region: Mala Gruda and Velika Gruda near Kotor and Boljevića Gruda near Podgorica. Golden rings discovered in them, probably head ornaments, have been compared to those from the Early Helladic II Tumulus R 15b at Steno on the island of Leukas (Primas 1996: 75–88, 146; Maran 2007: n. 42). Maran (2007: 9) emphasizes that the center of distribution of such golden rings lies in the Balkans and the Carpathian Basin, and that the Leukas examples therefore probably represent Balkan imports to northwest Greece, in which case they do not support the expansion of Aegean contacts and ideas north during the Early Bronze Age; rather, it was the other way around. In addition to these rings, however, there are two other significant items in the Mala Gruda tumulus: (1) a golden dagger, which may be Aegean, Levantine, or Anatolian, and (2) a silver shaft-hole axe, at first interpreted as Dalmatian and then as Aegean in origin (references in Tomas 2009). These objects do point toward the south, and they were obviously objects of great value and importance.

Back Again

Returning to Kristiansen and Larsson (2005), we are now in a position to reevaluate the archaeological data as they relate to the idea that hierarchical institutions, such as that of the warrior king, spread north to Europe from the eastern Mediterranean via Aegean intermediaries. In order to have Bronze Age warriors, there must have been warfare. And for these warriors to have become kings, they must have had access to hierarchical political institutions. Kristiansen and Larsson make the case that the European idea of kingship, which was linked to war, spread to the continent from the Near East during the later Bronze Age. But the earliest evidence for war in Europe is associated not with the Aegean but with Neolithic defensive enclosures, and these are found only rarely in the wide geographic arc

that encompasses Iberia, southern France, the Adriatic, and western Greece (Parkinson and Duffy 2007: 99, fig. 2). This pattern may be linked to the region's Mediterranean environment, which encouraged grain agriculture versus cattle herding (Halstead 1994). Without cattle herds, there were no cattle raids – the main reason for enclosures and one of the primary sources of conflict in prehistoric societies (Runnels *et al.* 2009).

Warfare and a warrior culture did not evolve in the Aegean. Nor were they transferred there from points east. Rather, they spread to the Aegean from Europe in the Early to Middle Bronze Age, together with the tradition of tumulus burial, possibly through contact with the Cetina culture. Warrior graves are not found in the Cyclades during the earlier Bronze Age, nor are they associated with Minoan Crete, so these societies could not and did not provide the primary institutional template for Mycenaean kingship. Mycenaean political hierarchy, which formed the basis for Mycenaean state organization, was the fabricated product of a European warrior ethos mixed with Minoan forms of regional economic control based around palatial centers. Mycenaean political authority was a hybrid product of appropriation, of European *and* Minoan materials and practices. It owed very little to the eastern Mediterranean.

When the Minoan states collapsed, the Mycenaean took control of Aegean systems of trade and exchange (Parkinson and Galaty 2007; Galaty *et al.* 2009). Cline (2007) has demonstrated that absolute numbers of foreign imports to Mycenaean states spiked in the Late Helladic IIIB period at the same time there was a precipitous decline in Minoan foreign imports. Foreign imports decline in both regions in Late Helladic IIIC. Parkinson (2010) has reanalyzed Cline's data, grouping artifacts from similar contexts, similar periods, and similar origins into 'contacts.' This effort produced several pertinent patterns. First, the number of foreign contacts with Mycenaean states holds steady from Late Helladic IIIB to Late Helladic IIIC. Second, during Late Helladic IIIB, most foreign contacts took place via the palaces, and the vast majority were with the palace at Mycenae itself. Conversely, the vast majority of Late Helladic IIIC foreign contacts are indicated by artifacts from burial contexts, for example at Perati. And finally, there is some evidence that foreign contacts with the Aegean actually increased in the early Iron Age, at the start of the so-called Greek 'Dark Age.' Jones (2000), for example, catalogued 380 early Iron Age foreign items on Crete, almost as many as the 407 documented for the Late Bronze Age. The early Iron Age frequency of 7.62 items per decade, as calculated by Parkinson (2010: 20), actually exceeds that of the Late Bronze Age.

The vast majority of Mycenaean contacts (*sensu* Parkinson 2010) during the Late Bronze Age were with eastern states – Egypt, Cyprus, and along the Levantine coast – made primarily with Mycenae. This stands in stark contrast to the patterns established above for the Early Bronze Age, when peoples living in Greece traded with and were heavily influenced by peoples living to the north, in particular in western Greece. In later periods, as the influence of Kolonna waned and mainland Greece was drawn more fully into the Minoan orbit, their northern contacts revolved more and more exclusively around metal and metal items. Whereas they may have searched the Adriatic for metal in the Middle Bronze Age and early Late Helladic, in Late Helladic III they gained full access to eastern, particularly Cypriot, sources, and contacts with the north were altered or severed. These were renewed in Late Helladic IIIC, as indicated by late Mycenaean pottery in Albanian tumuli (Bejko 1993; 1994) and Naue II swords of northern origin in the 'warrior graves' of the northwest Peloponnesus (Papadopoulou 2007). The consequences of these renewed northern trade connections were profound.

Our analysis indicates that precisely during the time that Mycenaean states were in the best position to transmit Near Eastern objects, symbols, and ideas to Europe via the eastern Adriatic (during the Late Helladic IIIA–B), *they had no, or very few, northern contacts.* Those contacts that did exist were focused largely on the export of pottery, not material culture related to warfare and hierarchy. It was only after the Mycenaean states had disappeared that trade connections with the north surged once again, but most of the interaction was tilted from north to south. Trade was funneled through the Adriatic, Italy in particular, and on to the Aegean via the Gulf of Corinth, along the so-called 'Great Isthmus Corridor Route' (Kase *et al.* 1991). Mycenaean settlements in the Ionian Islands were not abandoned; in fact, they grew and may have been primary destinations for 'refugee' populations who fled the Peloponnesus (Deger-Jalkotzy 2008: 394). The so-called 'handmade burnished ware' (HBW) pottery, exceedingly common throughout southern Europe north of Greece, in Late Bronze and early Iron Age Albania for example, is found throughout the Aegean beginning in the Late Helladic IIIC, often at former palace sites, and in large numbers at Chania and Kommos on Crete (Shaw 1998). The spread of HBW through Greece marks the reintegration of the west Adriatic and Aegean interaction spheres (Belardelli and Bettelli 2007).

With reintegration came new trade goods, including amber, supplies of which had waned during the Late Bronze Age. Much of the early Iron Age amber that moved into Greece came via Italy (Harding 1984: 246, 259;

2000:190; Palavestra 1993: 251; Càssola Guida 1999), but it is also found in tremendous amounts in the Balkans. In Albania, for example, there are only 61 amber artifacts known from the entire Bronze Age, the majority of which date to the tail end of the Late Bronze Age, but there are hundreds of examples from later, Iron Age tumuli (Kurti 2013). To the north in Serbia, amber is associated with the so-called 'Princely Grave' phenomenon, a complex of extremely wealthy warrior graves dating to the late Iron Age (Palavestra 1994; 1995). Palavestra (1994; 1995) associates the development of Balkan forms of social complexity and hierarchy, symbolized by the 'Princely Graves,' with Iron Age expansion of livestock herding and short-distance, vertical transhumance. Cattle functioned as 'wealth on the hoof' but were subject to raids, thereby leading to intensified competition and conflict between tribal units throughout the course of the Iron Age, and to a reinvigoration of the warrior ethos, including burial in tumuli. This lifestyle and the elaboration of hierarchical political institutions linked to warfare are typical of the Iron Age throughout all of Europe, including 'Celtic' Europe, the primary source for modern-day, stereotyped images of warrior kings (Thurston 2009: 347–48).

It is as yet unclear what caused the collapse of the Mycenaean states (Deger-Jalkotzy 2008: 390–92), but it is relatively clear that the European Iron Age lifestyle and warrior ethos encompassed the Aegean as well. During the Greek 'Dark Ages,' there was an intensified focus on livestock, as described by Palmer (2001: 171):

The main differences between Mycenaean and Dark Age land use lay in the Dark Age emphasis on herds as wealth, and the extensive use of land for grazing, which was possible due to the low population, and lack of competition between crop cultivation and herding.

Greek Iron Age chiefs, like their northern neighbors, were also interred in spectacular graves, the so-called 'warrior burials,' particularly common in Achaea, a region well positioned to control trade through the Gulf of Corinth (Deger-Jalkotzy 2006). The most spectacular of these Greek warrior burials comes from the site of Lefkandi in Euboea, from the cemetery of Toumba. There a mound was raised over a destroyed, monumental (50×13.8 m) structure, an apsidal longhouse, which contained two burials, one of a man and one of a woman, dating to ca. 950 BC (Popham *et al.* 1982). These internments were accompanied by four horse burials, symbolic of the warrior-herding culture of the Iron Age, and held a wide range of exotic artifacts, from the eastern Mediterranean and Europe (Nightingale 2007).

The individuals buried at Lefkandi embody and represent in stunning fashion the processes we have outlined

above: the flow of objects and ideas from Europe to the Aegean during the Iron Age – e.g., elaboration of a warrior ethos, based on a western model, including burial in tumuli, exactly repeating patterns of culture contact that had been established first in the earlier Bronze Age but were neglected under the Mycenaean. Iron Age cultural transmission generated in the Aegean a fantastic, new material culture and cultural practices that were as much products of Europe as they were of the East, and were therefore very different from the preceding Mycenaean material culture and cultural practices. As Morris (1999: 77) describes with regard to Dark Age Greece:

The most reasonable interpretation ... is that the peripheral relationship [of the Greeks] to the East was something constructed in context by knowledgeable social actors. Some Greeks keenly sought out the East; others resisted it. In some times and places ... the East had an overwhelming presence; in other times and places ... it was apparently consciously ignored.

Our data indicate that in the Early Bronze and early Iron Ages, the Aegean largely rejected the East in favor of the West. For this reason, European social complexity was as much an indigenous development as it was a product of contact with the eastern Mediterranean.

Conclusion: Contact, Transmission, Hybridization

As we have tried to demonstrate, Kristiansen and Larsson's (2005) work of synthesis provides a broad base from which to launch micro-historical analytical investigations of specific regions through time, drawing on local archaeological records. Our study of the route of interaction that connected the eastern Mediterranean to the Adriatic and Europe via the Aegean reveals just how much spatial, chronological, and social variation there was in this one particular zone of interaction. We cannot say that Kristiansen and Larsson's (2005) model for the rise of complex societies in Europe is wrong. But we can say that objects and ideas, symbols and people, often moved through the Eurasian world-system in unexpected ways. Our data indicate that culture contact between Europe and the Aegean, in both the Bronze and the Iron Age, had surprising, sometimes unintended consequences, which in some cases run counter to general expectations. Certainly, old ideas of *ex oriente lux*, which are the basis for pernicious forms of 'Occidentalism,' can be roundly rejected.

At the most general analytical scales, encompassing all of Eurasia and over the *longue durée*, we believe we can see the effects of interaction as described by Helms (1988; 1993; 1998). In this, we very much agree with

Kristiansen and Larsson (2005: 17): Bronze Age people throughout Europe exploited access to esoteric objects and knowledge, related to metal in particular, in order to enhance their power over others, and this was one potential source of increased social hierarchy. It seems to us, however, that only rarely were such objects and knowledge inserted into existing European institutions in ways that were truly imitative of eastern models; transmission and imitation (i.e., 'copying') seem to have been the exception, not the rule. As Cherry (2009: 138) describes for Prepalatial Crete:

...an explanatory roadblock that requires further research concerns the fact that we have little idea about the semantic connotations of the objects reaching Crete from overseas, especially from Egypt. Were *any* objects transferred in a way that preserved the associated meanings they exemplified in the original culture? Or were these associations discarded, transformed, or hybridized in the act of transfer?

Given the very low levels of interregional contact that we have documented for our study region, it is difficult to see how objects symbolic of kingship, retrieved from distant lands, might have held their meaning and served as vehicles for European social transformation. This problem is particularly acute given that even during the periods when there was the most contact, the Early Bronze and early Iron Ages, the relationships forged were not ones of dependency. In world-systems terms, Bronze Age Europe was truly marginal: it was linked to the Mediterranean but was politically independent. It did not experience any of the incorporative processes outlined by Hall (1986; 1998a; 1998b; 2000; 2001). The Aegean, on the other hand, did, but in ways that encouraged negotiated peripherality (cf. Morris 1999, quoted above) and led to hybridization. Hybridization practices are a common product of culture contact in frontier zones, where one population actively engages or colonizes another (Turchin and Hall 2003). The Mycenaeans, for example, experienced and adopted Minoan cultural practices in just such a context, in the Cycladic buffer zone that separated them from Crete (Broodbank 2000; Knappett *et al.* 2008). But they also experienced and adopted European cultural practices through their 'gateway' communities in the Adriatic, in southern Italy, and in Epirus. These communities were not colonial in the true sense of the word. They were outposts only. Meaningful interaction between Mycenaeans and natives up the eastern Adriatic coast, therefore, was limited or nonexistent (a conclusion also reached in Tomas 2009).

Local, transformative interactions between the Aegean and the Adriatic first occurred not during the Mycenaean period but rather during the Early Bronze Age, during

which time 'Helladic' individuals interacted with 'Cetina' individuals. It was the former who were transformed through these interactions, however, not the latter. Cetina culture already emphasized the importance of warfare, metal weapons, and individualizing burial in monumental tombs, well before these became standard features of Helladic culture, the primary bases for later, Mycenaean power relations. If there was any diffusion of objects, symbols, and ideas related to warrior aristocracy, it seems more likely that these moved from Europe to the Aegean via the Adriatic in the Early Bronze Age, not the other way around, and long before any meaningful contact was established with the eastern Mediterranean.

In the dynamic region of the Adriatic, in the small-world where Epirus, Illyria, Italy, and the Ionian Islands all meet, creating a frontier zone that is still apparent today, aggrandizing Early Bronze Age 'big men' met and mixed in gateway communities up and down the coast. Those from the north transmitted war-related objects – e.g., shaft-hole hammer axes – to their southern neighbors. At first, these objects trickled into Greece, adopted by 'learners' who used them to leverage nascent forms of social inequality. Eventually they introduced new forms of burial as well, i.e., tumuli, which mark the shift to what is regarded as chiefdom-level political organization (Pullen 2008). These changes suggested to early archaeologists that an invasion had rocked Greece at the transition from the Early Bronze to the Middle Bronze Age (e.g., Caskey 1960), but Forsén (1992) demonstrated convincingly that the spatial and chronological distribution of these artifacts and features did not fit an invasion pattern. This is not to say that there was no conflict at all; rather, the transition from the Early to the Middle Helladic appears to have been marked by interregional violence and a retreat to inland systems of settlement in the Middle Bronze Age (Wright 2008). The violence that accompanied the transition to the Middle Helladic in Greece signals a cultural shift whereby 'novel' behaviors, derived from the north during the Early Bronze Age, were transformed into 'modal' behaviors by the start of the Middle Bronze Age. This cultural transformation allowed the remarkable florescence of Greek warrior culture best symbolized by the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, which present an interesting mix of local and foreign grave goods, the hybridized recipe for Mycenaean kings.

What is most startling about the Greek early Iron Age, as we have presented it above, is how closely patterns of change at the end of the Mycenaean period mimic those that occurred at the end of the Early Bronze Age, and with very similar results: the introduction of new northern weapon types; apsidal houses; intramural and tumulus burial; new forms of social and political organization; and a hybridized material culture that points East and West.

Our analysis indicates that the new cultural forms that characterized Dark Age Greece are similar to those that characterized Middle Bronze Age Greece because they had similar European origins. Europe and the Aegean have similar cultural systems not because they both stem ultimately from the East, but rather because they both responded to similar, world-systemic effects, a beautiful example of what Turchin and Hall (2003: 38–39) call large-scale, cyclic spatial synchronicity:

Ecological models show that if two (or more) systems separated in space are driven by largely endogenous dynamics, and if their endogenous dynamics are broadly similar (e.g. have approximately the same period), then their cycles may be synchronized by a variety of shared exogenous perturbations, and these perturbations need not be very strong.

This, we assert, explains the macro-scale patterns synthesized by Kristiansen and Larsson (2005). Two systems, European and Aegean, oscillating, brought in and out of phase with one another, reacting to the East but not of the East.

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