

ATLAS
of
**CLASSICAL
HISTORY**

Edited by
**RICHARD
J.A. TALBERT**

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ATLAS *of* CLASSICAL HISTORY

EDITED BY RICHARD
J.A. TALBERT



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CONTENTS

Preface	v	Northern Greece, Macedonia and Thrace	32
Contributors	vi	The Eastern Aegean and the Asia Minor	
Equivalent Measurements	vi	Hinterland	33
Maps: map and text page reference placed first, further reading reference second		Attica	34–5, 181
The Mediterranean World: Physical	1	Classical Athens	35–6, 181
The Aegean in the Bronze Age	2–5, 179	Roman Athens	35–6, 181
Troy	3, 179	Halicarnassus	36, 181
Knossos	3, 179	Miletus	37, 181
Minoan Crete	4–5, 179	Priene	37, 181
Mycenae	5, 179	Greek Sicily	38–9, 181
Mycenaean Greece	4–6, 179	Syracuse	39, 181
Mainland Greece in the Homeric Poems	7–8, 179	Akragas	40, 181
The Homeric World	8–9, 179	Cyrene	40, 182
Dark Age Greece	10–11, 179–80	Olympia	41, 182
Late Geometric Greece	12, 179–80	Greek Dialects <i>c.</i> 450 BC	42–3, 182
Greek Colonisation (Eighth to Sixth Centuries BC)	13–15, 180	The Athenian Empire	44–5, 182
Archaic Greece	16–17, 180	Peloponnesian War, 431–404 BC	46–8
The Persian Empire <i>c.</i> 550–330 BC	18–20, 180	Pylos/Sphacteria	49, 182
Persepolis	21, 180	The Bosporan Realm and its Neighbours	49–50, 182
Marathon, 490 BC	21–2, 180	Trade in the Classical Greek World	51–3, 182
Persian Wars	22–3	The Ancient Explorers	54–5, 182
Thermopylae: Ephialtes' Route	24, 180	Archaeological Sites of Greece	56–7, 182
Artemisium, 480 BC	24, 180	The Anabasis	58–9, 182
Salamis, 480 BC	25, 180	Leuctra, 371 BC	59, 183
Plataea, 479 BC	25, 181	The Second Athenian League	60–1, 183
Delphi	26, 181	Chaeronea, 338 BC	61, 183
Sparta	27, 181	The Growth of Macedonian Power, 359–36 BC	62–3, 183
The Hellespont	27	Alexander's Campaigns, 334–23 BC	64–6
Greece: Physical	28	River Granicus, 334 BC	67, 183
The Peloponnese and Central Greece	29	Issus, 333 BC	67, 183
The Aegean World	30–1	Tyre, 332 BC	68
		Gaugamela, 331 BC	68, 183
		River Hydaspes, 326 BC	69, 183
		Ai Khanum	69, 183–4

The Hellenistic Kingdoms	70–6	Caracalla	120–1, 185
General	75, 184	Rome in the Age of the Severi	120–3, 185
I Survey	70–1	The Environs of Imperial Rome	122, 184
II Greece and Western Asia Minor	72–3	Trade in the Roman World	124–7, 186
III Eastern Asia Minor and Syria	74	The Roman Empire in AD 60	127–9, 187
IV Ptolemaic Egypt	76	Roman Britain	130–2, 187
Pergamum	77, 184	Hadrian's Wall	132–4, 187
Delos	78, 184	Antonine Wall	132–4, 187
Major Cult Centres of the Classical		Silchester	135, 187
World	79–81, 184	Lutetia Parisiorum	135, 187
Major Cult Centres of the Aegean	80	Roman Gaul and the Alpine Region	136–7, 187
Major Cult Centres of Italy and Sicily	81	Germanies-Raetia-Noricum	138–9, 187
Alexandria	81, 184	The Rhine-Danube Limes from	
Etruria and Etruscan Expansion in		<i>c.</i> AD 40 to AD 259–60	140–1, 187
Northern Italy	82–3, 184	The Danubian Provinces/Balkan	
Early Italy	84–5, 184	Area <i>c.</i> AD 200	141–3, 187–8
Early Latium	86, 184	Iberian Peninsula	144–5, 188
The Languages of Italy Prior to the		Corsica and Sardinia	146–7, 188
Spread of Latin	87–8, 184	Roman Sicily	148–9, 188
Veii	88, 184	North African Provinces	150–2, 188
Cosa	89, 184	Africa Proconsularis	150, 188
Luna	89, 184	Imperial Estates in the R.Bagradas	
Republican Rome	90–1, 185	Valley	151, 188
Roman Expansion in Italy to 268 BC	92–3, 185	Timgad	153, 188
Roman Colonisation	94–5, 185	Lepcis Magna	153, 188
The Punic Wars	96–8, 185	African Limes	154–5, 188
Cannae, 216 BC	99, 185	Greek and Roman Crete	155–6, 188
Zama, 202 BC	99, 185	Roman Cyprus	156–7, 189
Carthage	100, 185	Bithynia and Asia <i>c.</i> AD 100	157–8, 189
Cynoscephalae, 197 BC	100–1, 185	Roman Asia Minor	159–61, 189
Thermopylae, 191 BC	101, 185	Roman Syria, Western Parthia and	
The Roman Empire in 60 BC	101–3, 185	Armenia	162–3, 189
Roman Campaigns of 49–30 BC	103–5, 185	Masada	164–5, 189
Pharsalus, 48 BC	105–6, 185	Jerusalem	164–5, 189
Augusta Praetoria	106, 185	Palestine	165–6, 189
Italy: Physical	107	Roman Egypt	167–8, 189
Italy in the Age of Augustus	108–9	The Roman Empire in AD 211	169–71, 187
Archaeological Sites of Italy	110–12, 186	Christianity by the Early Fourth	
Ostia	112–14, 186	Century	172–4, 189
Second Battle of Cremona, AD 69	114, 186	The Dioceses and Provinces of the	
Campania	115, 186	Roman Empire in AD 314	175–7, 189
Pompeii	116–117, 186	Reigns of Roman Emperors in Brief	178
Herculaneum	117–18, 186	Abbreviations	178
Italian Towns with Alimentary		Suggestions for Further Reading	179
Schemes	119–20, 186	Gazetteer	190
The Centre of Rome in the Age of			

PREFACE

In all likelihood this book has its origin in a chance encounter between Richard Stoneman, the humanities editor of Croom Helm Ltd, and myself at the classical societies' Oxford Triennial Conference in summer 1981. The subject of our conversation on that occasion eludes me. At any rate it was an unexpected pleasure to be approached by Richard in the autumn with a tentative proposal for the compilation of an atlas of classical history. We soon found that we were in close agreement on what was needed: a volume in which lucid maps offered the high school student and the undergraduate a reasonably comprehensive, up-to-date and scholarly coverage of classical history down to the time of Constantine, accompanied by modest elucidation of the material and by some suggestions for further reading. Explanation and discussion were felt to be especially important, so long as they did not outweigh the maps.

A concern to keep production costs under control has restrained us from including everything that we might have wished. The same concern has affected the size and number of pages in the atlas, while colour printing has proved out of the question. Use of some standard bases has helped to limit expenditure on cartography. Equally, without the help of expert colleagues the desired coverage of classical history would have been impossible to achieve. The warmest gratitude is therefore due to those throughout the British Isles who agreed with alacrity to contribute to the atlas and have done such excellent work. It has been deliberate editorial policy to be ready with guidance when required, but otherwise—in view of the contributors' specialist knowledge—to leave them a fairly free hand in the presentation of their material. Inevitably, however,

restraint did have to be exercised when texts submitted overran their allotted space.

In particular no standard convention for the spelling of names has been imposed. Since a convention which meets with general satisfaction has yet to be devised, in a work of this character an editor who sought to impose one of his own making would only face exceptions, pleas, arguments, delay, as well as increasing the possibility of mistakes and diverting attention from more important issues. Whatever an editor does, he has no hope of pleasing everybody where this perennial controversy is concerned. As it is, notably outlandish or unusual spelling of names has been discouraged, Latin forms have been recommended where serious doubt has arisen, and an effort has been made to keep each individual contributor's usage consistent (since sometimes it was not!). Nonetheless, throughout the atlas as a whole inconsistency does still remain. While any distress caused to purists who read through from cover to cover is regretted, arguably the degree of inconsistency present should hardly cause undue difficulties of comprehension anywhere, and should prove of little account to those who refer just to two or three maps at a time.

No matter how carefully plans are laid in advance, in a complex project of this type the need for certain changes and improvements will only emerge as work proceeds. Such developments are the principal cause of failure to publish the atlas during 1984, as had originally been intended. However the remarkable fact that this target will be missed by so very few months is due above all to the efforts of Jayne Lewin and Richard Stoneman. Taking over from A. Berezney at an early stage,

Jayne has executed the cartographic work for nearly the entire volume with artistry, speed, efficiency and good humour: her responsiveness to contributors' diverse requirements has been especially appreciated. Richard, as well as initiating the project and contributing to it, has offered all possible encouragement and support throughout. Not least my own debt to him is enormous: no editor could have been served better.

In Belfast, too, my colleagues (especially Raymond Davis) have given unfailing support and have patiently sought to answer my astonishing range of queries. Janis Boyd's secretarial work has been superb. I continue to appreciate the high quality of the University Library's holdings, and

the assistance of University funds towards travel and research. In addition thanks are due to N.G.L. Hammond, W.V.Harris, R.Hope Simpson, A. Powell and M.L.Pringle. But above all this atlas has been a collaborative effort. If it succeeds in its principal aim of stimulating the readers for whom it is designed, then there will be cause for joint satisfaction on the part of all those who have worked hard to achieve it.

Richard Talbert

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1984

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EQUIVALENT MEASUREMENTS

1 hectare=10,000 sq metres=2.47 acres

1 Roman foot=0.295 metres

1 Roman mile=5,000 Roman feet=1475 metres

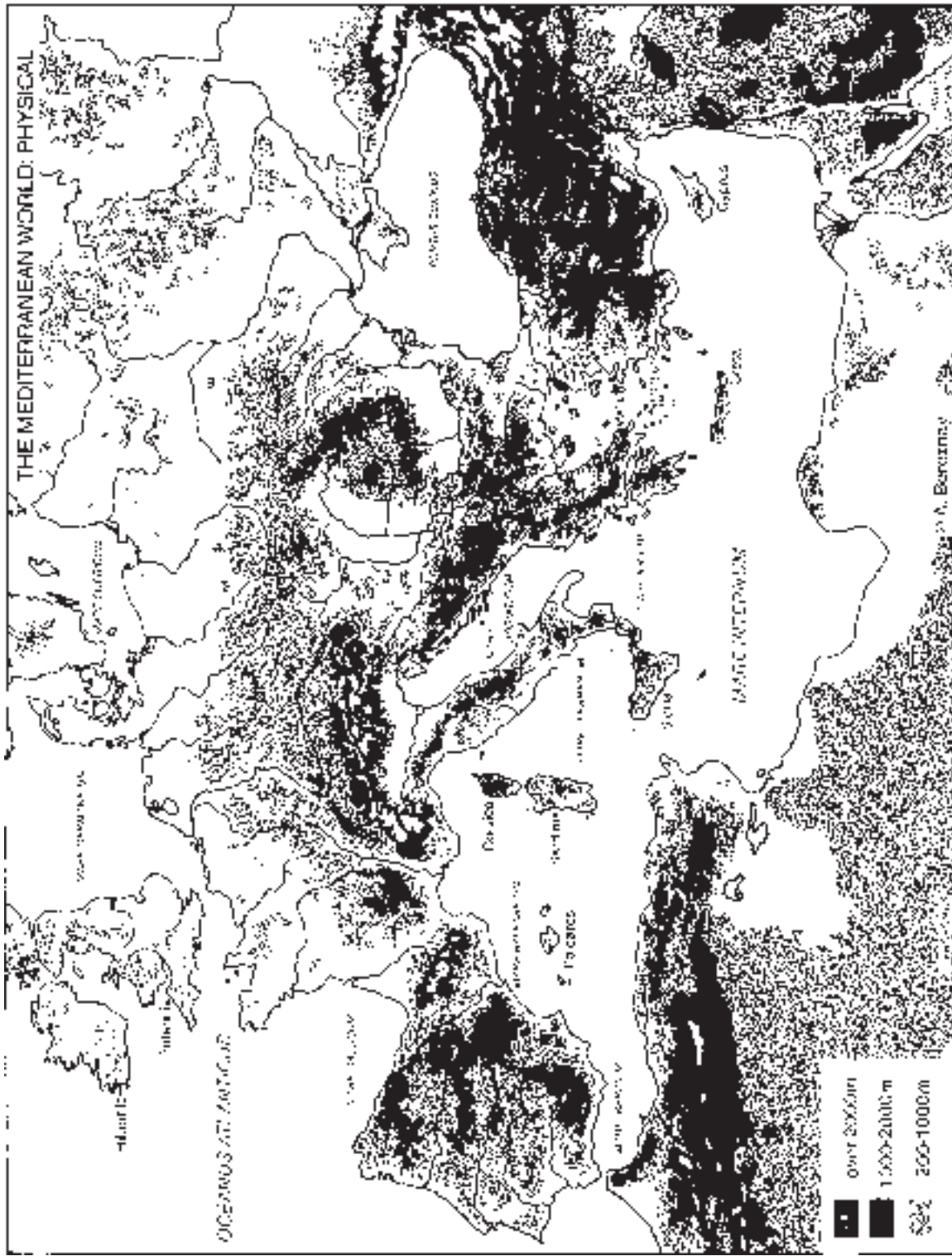
1 metre=1.09 yards

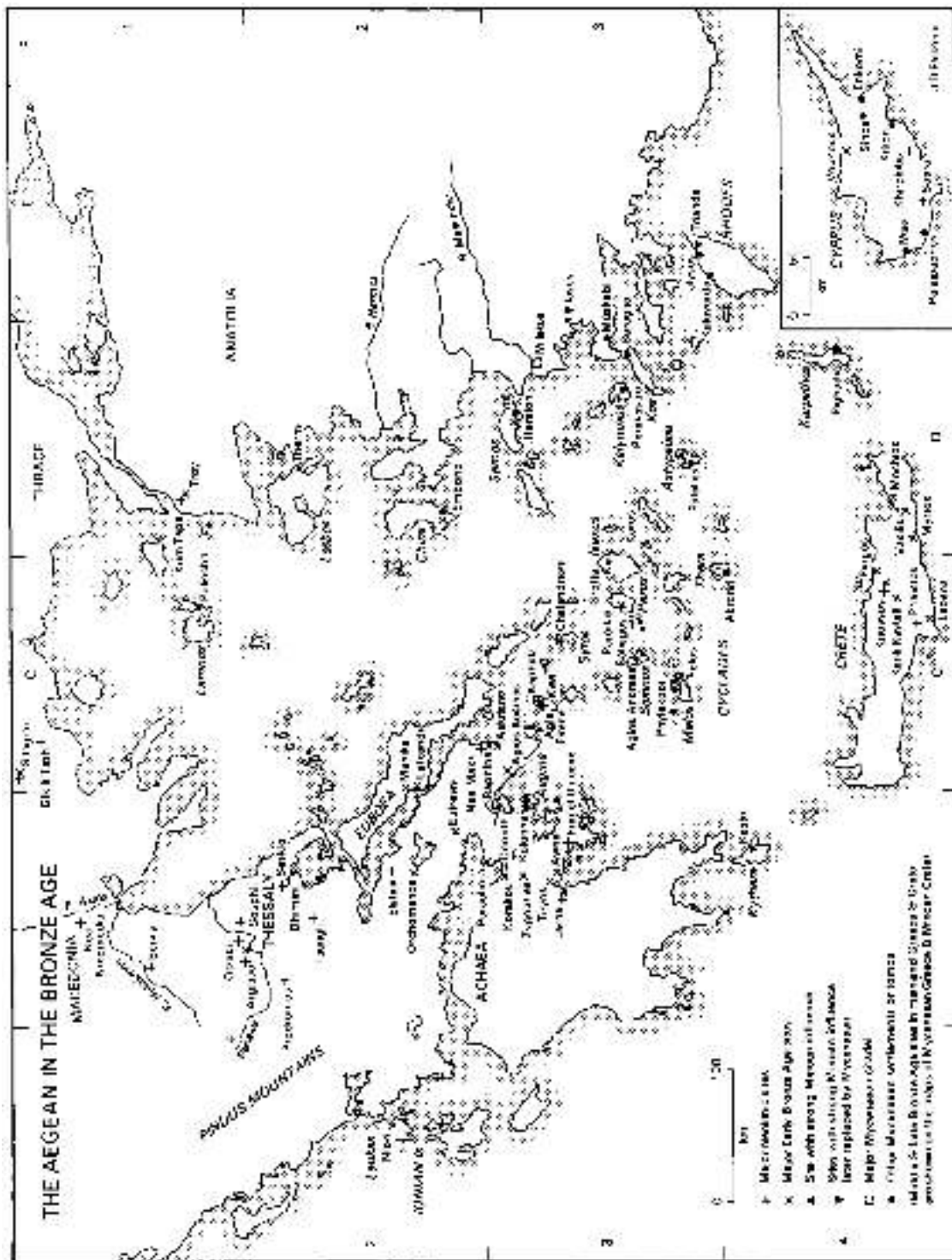
1000 metres=1 kilometre=0.62 miles

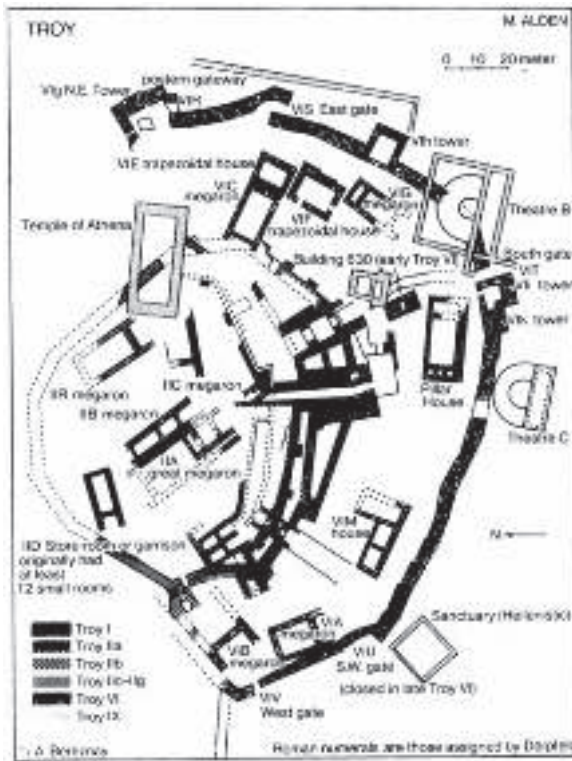
10 km=6.21 miles

50 km=31.07 miles

100 km=62.14 miles

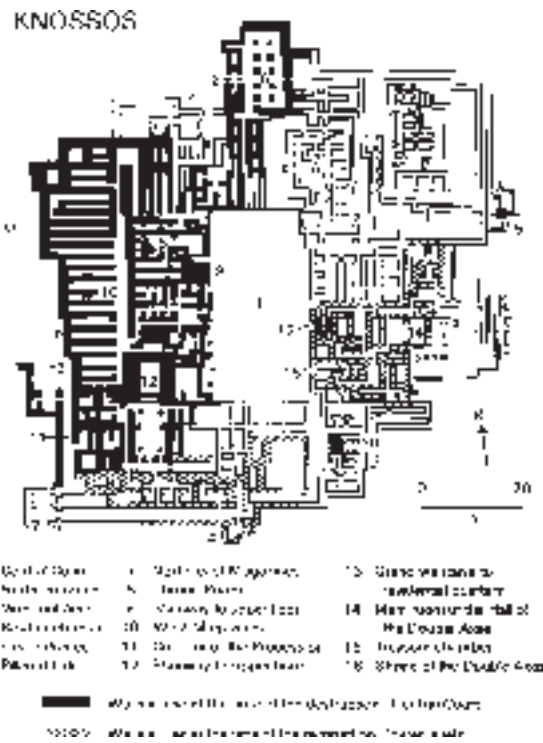






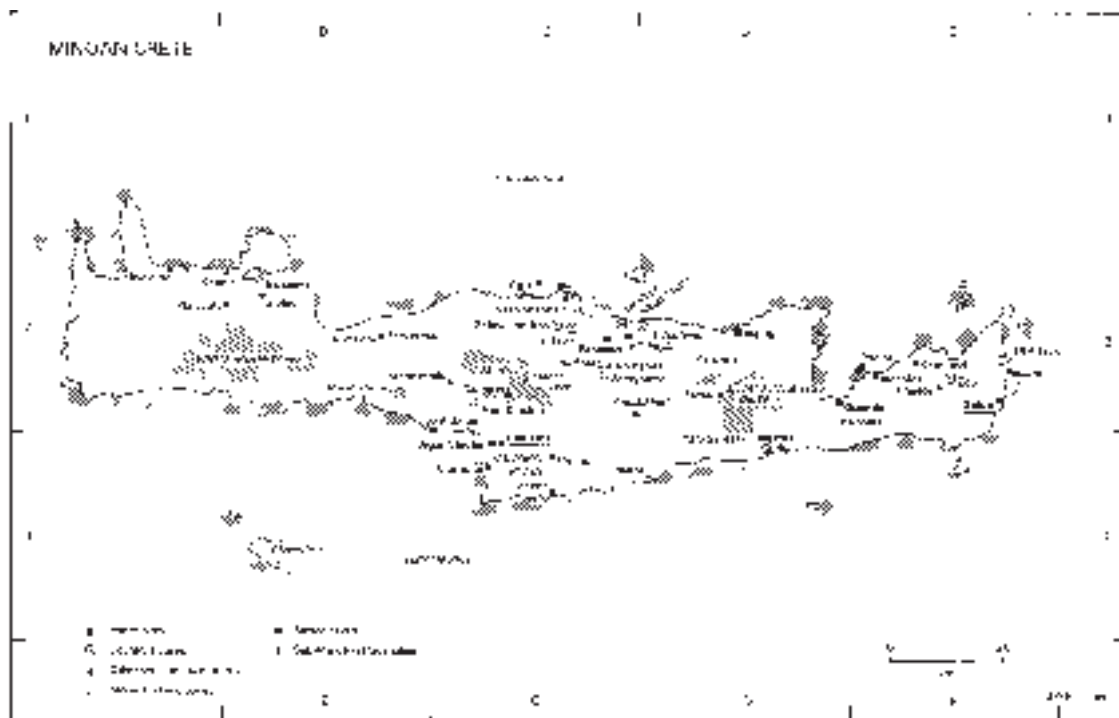
Troy (Hissarlik)

Before excavation the city of Troy (later Ilium) was a tell more than 31 metres high. Excavations by Schliemann (1870–90), Dörpfeld (1893–4), and the University of Cincinnati (1932–8) revealed 46 separate strata, making up nine major layers (I–IX), each with a number of subdivisions. Occupation dates at least from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, and the wealthy city of Troy II (Treasure of Priam) has fortifications comparable in grandeur with those of the approximately contemporary sites of Thermi on Lesbos and Poliochni on Lemnos. Troy VI, in which the horse first appears here, is the settlement which spans the Middle Bronze Age and earlier part of the Late Bronze Age: it seems to have been destroyed by an earthquake around 1300 BC. Mycenaean IIIb pottery in Troy VIIa, destroyed by fire c. 1260, has led to its identification with Homer’s Troy, the destruction of which was traditionally placed in 1184 by Eratosthenes on genealogical grounds. The city continued through various vicissitudes to be inhabited until c. AD 500.



Knossos

The Cretan city of Knossos and its king, Minos, appear several times in the Homeric poems; Knossians led by Idomeneus take part in the expedition against Troy. In 1878 the site was investigated by Minos Kalokairinos, who found a tall earthenware storage jar (*pitthos*), now in the British Museum. Full-scale excavations were begun by Arthur Evans in 1900. The earliest levels were found to be preceramic Neolithic. Despite destructions occupation continued through all phases of the Bronze Age. Evans named the phases of the Cretan Bronze Age ‘Minoan’ after King Minos. The Middle Minoan palace at Knossos, destroyed c. 1700, was replaced by the magnificent one shown here. It was built around a central court, with state rooms, storage magazines, and several storeys of luxurious residential apartments. It suffered destruction c. 1450. Afterwards it alone among the Cretan palaces was re-occupied, albeit on a reduced scale; the new inhabitants were probably Mycenaean. The final destruction was by fire, c. 1375–50.



The Aegean in the Bronze Age, Minoan Crete, Mycenaean Greece

Pages 2, 4 and 6 show the most important sites at which excavations have revealed settlements or tombs in the period from 6500 to 1200 BC. *The Aegean in the Bronze Age* gives Neolithic and Early Bronze Age sites for the whole area, as well as later Bronze Age sites for the islands, Asia Minor and Cyprus. Later sites in Crete and mainland Greece are shown on the other two maps.

The most heavily settled areas in the Neolithic period (c. 6500–2900) seem to have been the fertile plains in north east Greece, but in the Early Bronze Age there was a change in the settlement pattern corresponding with a move from an economy based on cereals to a mixed economy of olives, vines and cereals. Settlements were made in the more rocky terrain of the islands, Crete and the Peloponnese, and a particularly prosperous and artistic culture flourished in the Cyclades. While in Crete the Early Bronze Age settlements seem to have led without a break to the founding

of the first great palaces in the twentieth century BC, on the mainland the end of the Early Bronze Age was marked by the violent destruction of sites and the arrival of a new people from Anatolia. These were probably the ancestors of the Greeks. In the next period (the Middle Bronze Age, c. 2000–1550) Crete replaced the Cyclades as the most prosperous civilisation in the western Aegean, while Asia Minor and the eastern Aegean were dominated by the city of Troy VI, also settled about 2000 BC by newcomers from Anatolia.

After the first Cretan palaces had been destroyed c. 1700, probably by earthquakes, they were rebuilt on an even grander scale. By the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (c. 1550) Crete was extending her influence widely across the Aegean, so that several of the island sites became culturally and perhaps also politically dependent on Crete. One of these, the town of Akrotiri on the volcanic island of Thera, was destroyed c. 1500 by an eruption which

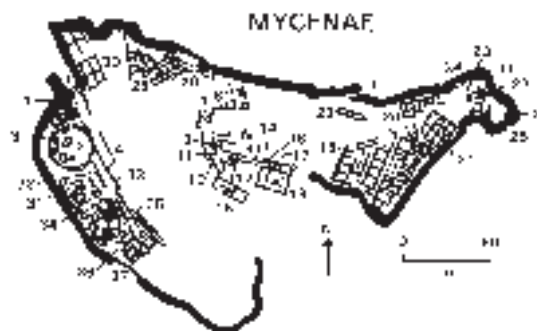
was followed shortly afterwards by the great explosion of the whole island. The precise sequence of events on Thera and their relation to the burning and abandonment of all the major Cretan sites except Knossos *c.* 1450 has been much debated, but however these sites were destroyed, their destruction marked the end of the Cretan dominance in the Aegean.

For the next 200 years (*c.* 1400–1200) the Mycenaean Greeks replaced the Minoans as masters of the Aegean. That their prosperity had been growing since *c.* 1600 is shown by the rich burials in the two Shaft Grave circles at Mycenae, and later by the construction of the monumental *tholos* tombs. After the Thera eruption the Mycenaean moved into Knossos, and by 1400 seem to have had control of the whole of Crete, until the palace was finally destroyed a few years later.

In the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries there was relative peace in the eastern Mediterranean, and the Mycenaean traded widely in the Aegean and beyond, replacing the Minoans in the island sites and establishing a major settlement at Miletus. On the Greek mainland palaces were built and some sites were heavily fortified. In the second half of the thirteenth century, probably as a result of internal wars, many of the Mycenaean sites were destroyed, the palace civilisation came to an end, and much of the population fled to Achaia and the Ionian islands in the west, and to Euboeia, the Cyclades and Cyprus in the east. However, Mycenaean society continued in Greece for a further hundred years until early in the eleventh century, by which time all the major sites except Athens had been abandoned.

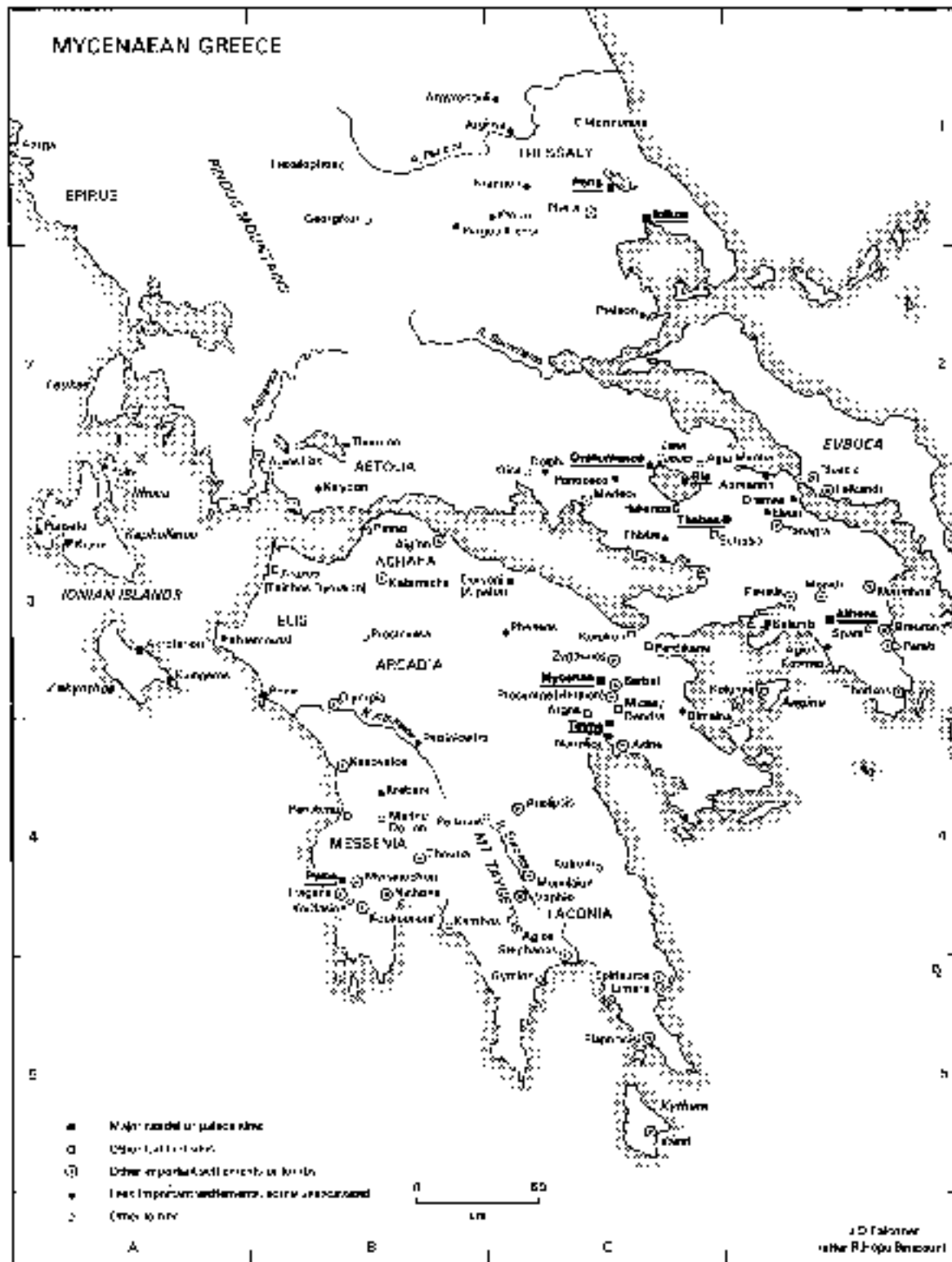
Mycenae

The citadel occupies a low hill, with Mounts Profitis Elias and Szara to the north and east. Sherds suggest that habitation dates from the Neolithic period, but the site seems to have risen to importance during the Middle Bronze Age, when the wealthy Grave Circles A (found by Schliemann in 1876) and B were established; they form part of an extensive Middle and Late Bronze Age cemetery on the north west slopes. The Late Bronze Age city consisted of a palace on the hill, with houses, workshops and storerooms below. At first only the summit was fortified, though by the late thirteenth century a large area was enclosed, including the Cult Centre and Grave Circle A. Even with its massive walls and underground spring the city declined during the twelfth century, and was eventually burnt. However the area continued to be inhabited and in the Archaic period had a temple of Athene. Mycenae was sacked by the Argives in 468, but re-occupied in the Hellenistic period.

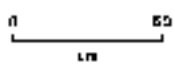


- | I The Citadel | | II North basalt-taludians | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 16 | 20 | 26 |
| 2 | 17 | 21 | 27 |
| 3 | 18 | 22 | 28 |
| 4 | 19 | 23 | 29 |
| 1 Stoa | 16 House of the North of the Citadel | 20 House C | 26 House G |
| 2 West Gate | 17 House of the West of the Citadel | 21 House E | 27 House H |
| 3 Middle terrace (part of the wall of Grave Circle A) | 18 House of the East of the Citadel | 22 Store rooms | 28 House M |
| 4 East Gate | 19 House of the South of the Citadel | 23 Underground spring | 29 House N |
| 5 North wall | | 24 North wall | 30 House O |
| 6 West wall | | 25 East Port | 31 House P |
| 7 Cult Centre of the Palace | | 26 House Q | 32 House R |
| 8 West Terrace | | 27 House S | 33 House T |
| 9 North Terrace | | 28 House U | 34 House V |
| 10 West Terrace | | 29 House W | 35 House X |
| 11 Southern Terrace | | 30 House Y | 36 House Z |
| 12 Palace | | 31 House of the West of the Citadel | 37 House AA |
| 13 Palace | | 32 House of the East of the Citadel | |
| 14 Gate room | | 33 House of the South of the Citadel | |
| 15 Store room | | 34 House of the North of the Citadel | |
| 16 House of the North | | 35 House of the South | |
| 17 House of the East | | 36 House of the West | |
| 18 House of the South | | 37 House of the North | |
| 19 House of the West | | | |
| 20 House of the East | | | |
| 21 House of the South | | | |
| 22 House of the North | | | |
| 23 House of the West | | | |
| 24 House of the East | | | |
| 25 House of the South | | | |
| 26 House of the North | | | |
| 27 House of the West | | | |
| 28 House of the East | | | |
| 29 House of the South | | | |
| 30 House of the North | | | |
| 31 House of the West | | | |
| 32 House of the East | | | |
| 33 House of the South | | | |
| 34 House of the North | | | |
| 35 House of the West | | | |
| 36 House of the East | | | |
| 37 House of the South | | | |

MYCENAEAN GREECE

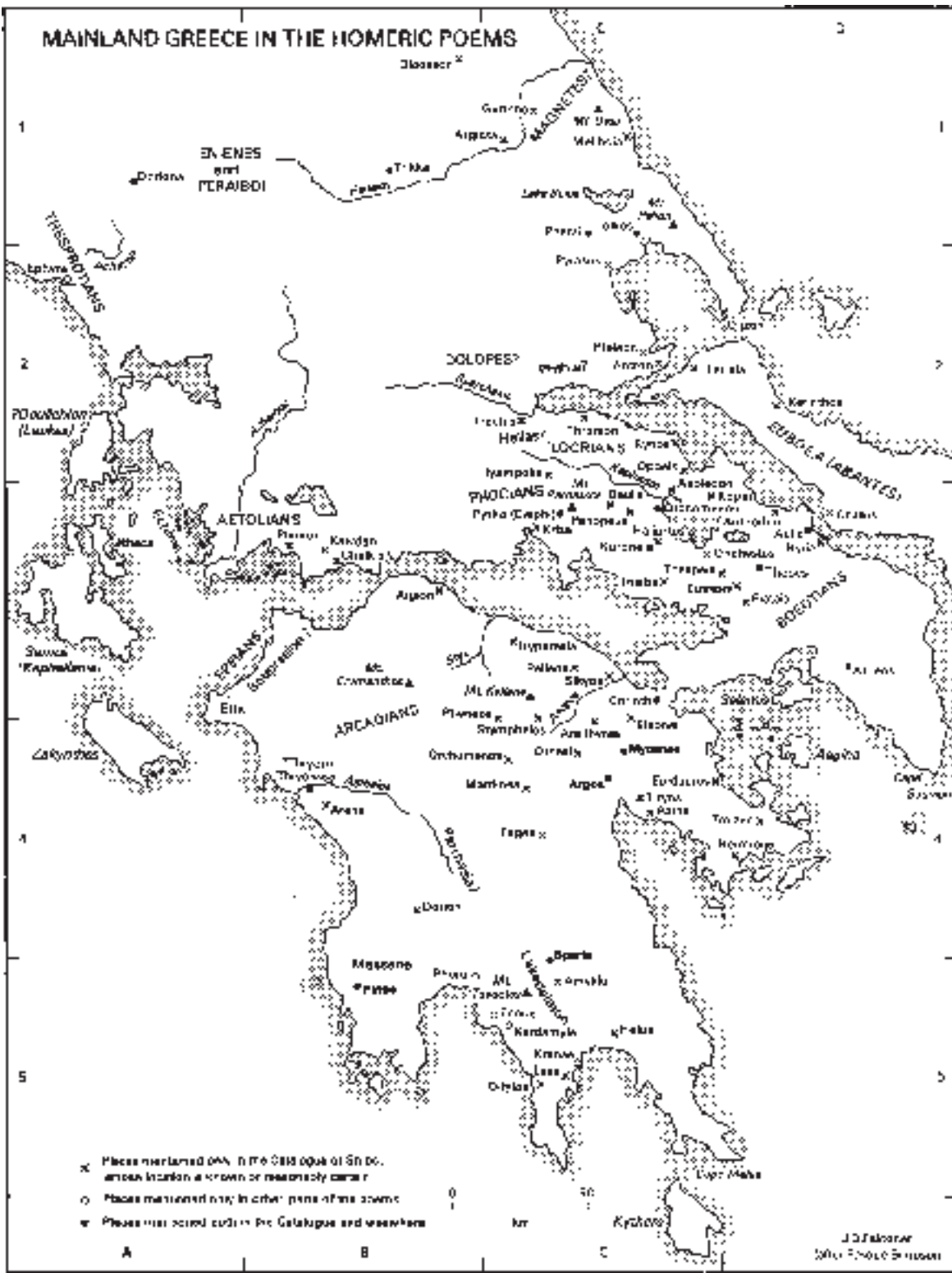


- Major roads or palace sites
- Objects at the site
- ⊙ Other important sites or towns
- ⊗ Important elements, some unexcavated
- Other sites



J.D. Falmer
with R. Hopu Benouari

MAINLAND GREECE IN THE HOMERIC POEMS



- x Places mentioned only in the Iliad (e.g. of Siphos, where location is known or reasonably certain)
- o Places mentioned only in other parts of the poems
- w Places mentioned both in the Catalogue and elsewhere

J. J. Coulton
 1961, 1962, 1963

Mainland Greece in the Homeric Poems and The Homeric World

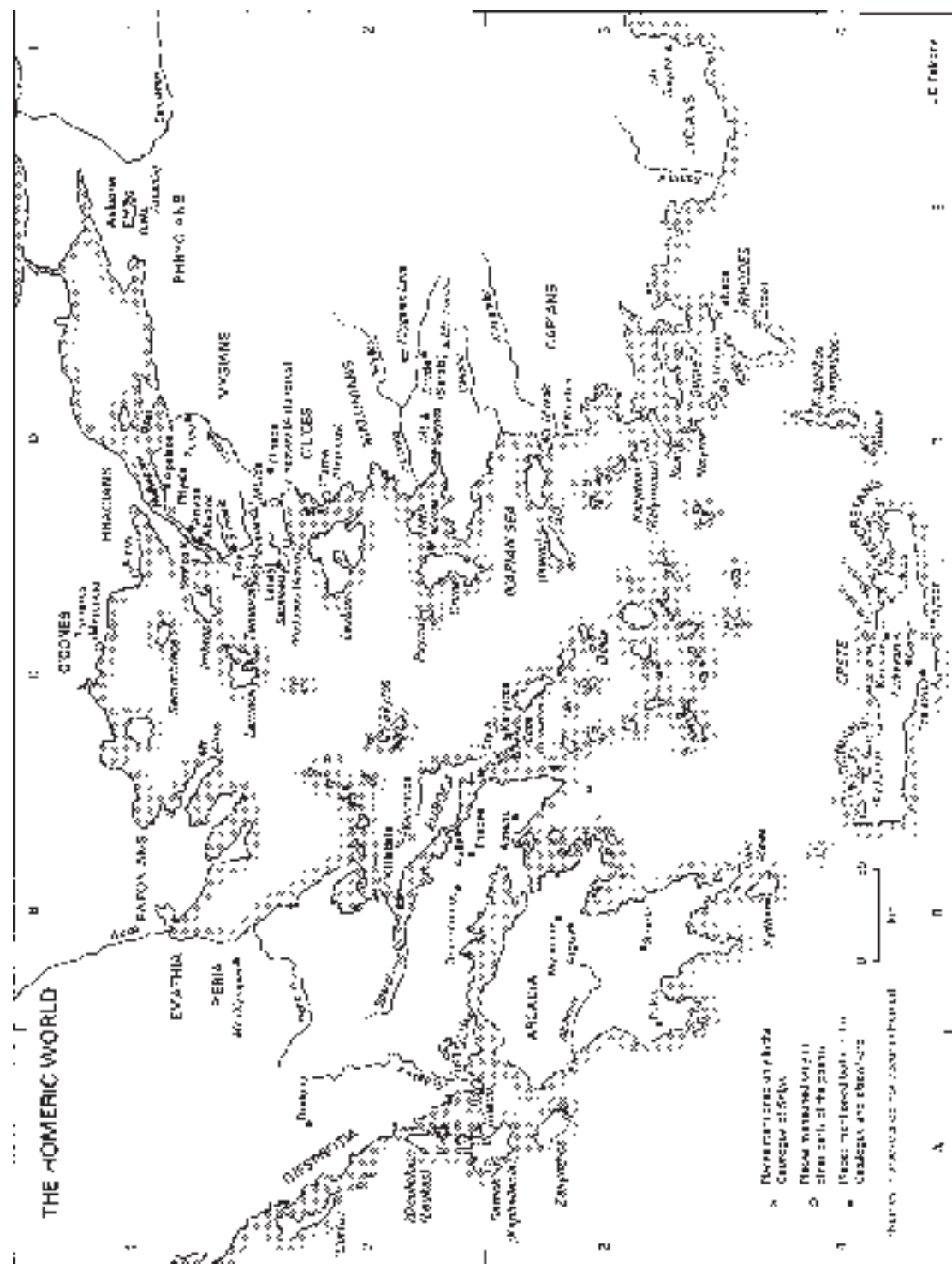
Mainland Greece in the Homeric Poems and *The Homeric World* are intended as a guide to readers of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and show the known or probable location of the main places referred to by Homer. Like other aspects of the poems, Homer's geography is a mixture of memories from the Mycenaean world, contemporary knowledge of the eighth or early seventh century BC, and fairy tale. The most detailed geographical information is given by the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad*, Book 2, which names 152 towns or districts in Greece and the islands, and 19 in Thrace, the Troad and Asia Minor. The position of many of these was unknown even to the Greeks of historical times, and it is likely that at least the Greek section of the Catalogue was a survival from the Mycenaean Age reflecting the settlement pattern of that period rather than of Homer's own time. Further evidence for this is provided by places in the Catalogue which archaeology has shown to have been unoccupied after the Mycenaean period (e.g. Eutresis, Krisa, Dorion and Pylos), and by the grouping of the towns into kingdoms which are quite unlike anything known in historical Greece. Although the Catalogue cannot originally have been composed to form part of the *Iliad* as we know it, the rest of the *Iliad* is broadly consistent with it in its picture of a Greece dominated by the important Mycenaean centres of Mycenae and Pylos.

The Trojan section of the Catalogue is far less informative than the Greek. Although the Troad itself is described in some detail, the territories of the Trojan allies cannot be located with any certainty. The Trojan Catalogue appears to describe Asia Minor before the Ionian migrations of around 1000 BC, with no reference to any of the later Greek cities on the coast, apart from Miletus which is specifically said to be occupied by 'barbarian-speaking Carians'. But whether this means that the Catalogue was composed in the Mycenaean period, or

merely represents later ideas of what Asia Minor was like at the time of the Trojan War, is still disputed. On the geography of the Troad, the rest of the *Iliad* adds details that are sometimes surprisingly accurate—for example, the fact that Poseidon could see Troy from the peak of Samothrace—and this feature has led to the suggestion that Homer may have had personal knowledge of the area.

It has also been claimed that the *Odyssey's* description of Ithaca and the islands round it was based on first-hand knowledge, but this has been questioned on the grounds that the account of the relative position of the islands is inaccurate. While the identification of Ithaca with modern Ithaki is now generally accepted, there is probably as much fiction as fact in the topographical details of caves, springs and bays on the island.

The main action of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* takes place in a world enclosed by Ithaca in the west, Troy in the east and Crete in the south. However, the boundaries of the Homeric world are extended by references to more distant peoples and places, Egypt and Libya in the south, Sidon and the Phoenicians in the east, as well as to a number of more or less mythical tribes, the Ethiopians and Pygmies in the south, the Taphians in the west and the Cimmerians in the north. Finally there are the wanderings of Odysseus, from the time when he was blown off course round Cape Malea. The origins of these stories lie in folk tales without any specific geographical location, but attempts were made quite early on by the Greeks themselves to fit them into the geography of the Mediterranean, so that the Phaeacians were placed on Corfu, Circe at Cape Circeo near Naples, Scylla and Charybdis in the Straits of Messina and the Cyclopes on Mount Etna. This location of Odysseus' wanderings in the west probably reflects the opening up of Sicily and south Italy to Greek trade and colonisation in the seventh century.



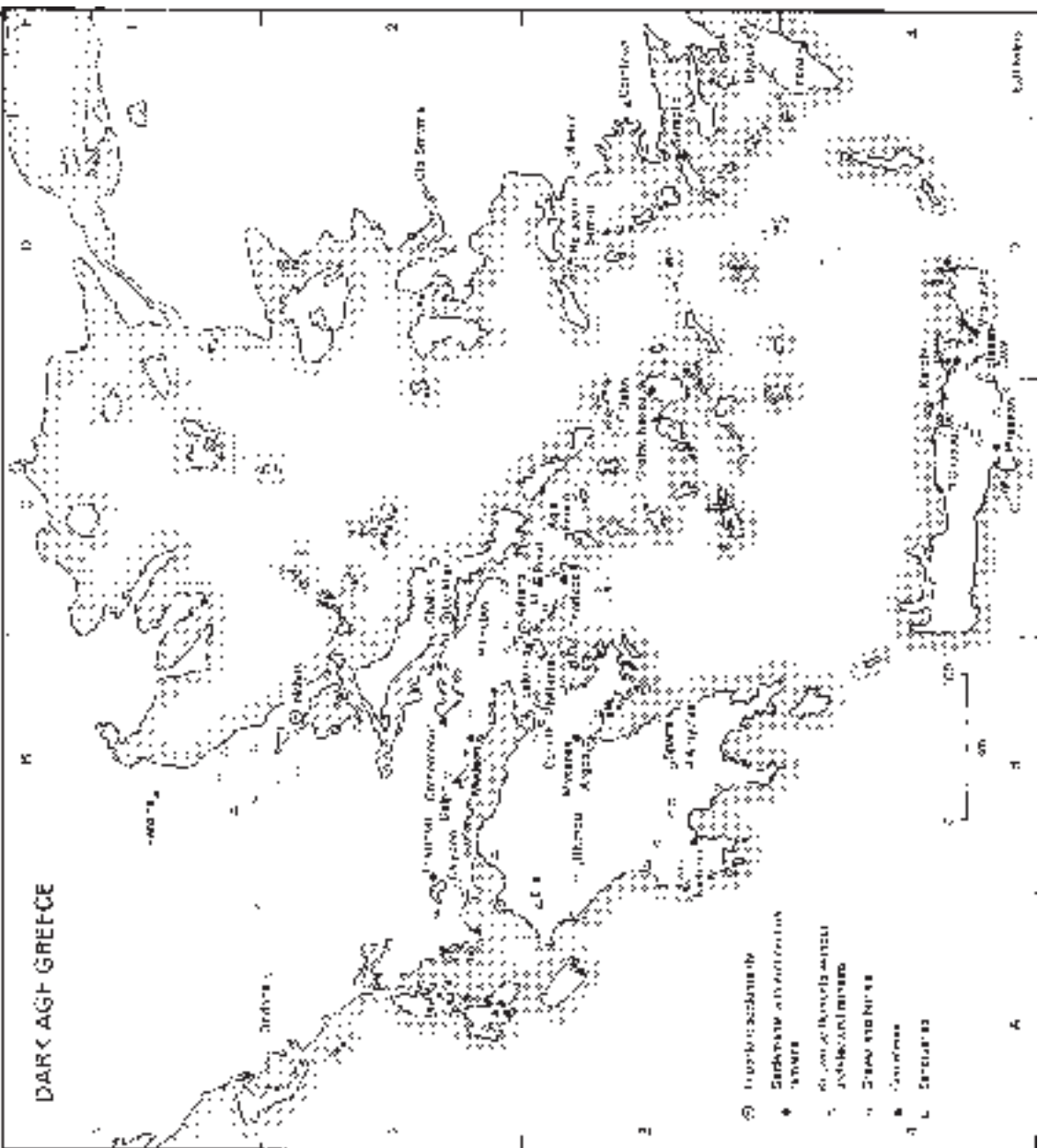
THE HOMERIC WORLD

- 1. Major cities and islands
- 2. Minor islands and islands
- 3. Major regions and islands
- 4. Minor regions and islands

Scale: 0 20 40 Miles

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

DARK AGE GREECE



- ⊙ Major centers
- Sites with Mycenaean remains
- ⊙ Sites with Mycenaean remains and other remains
- Sites with other remains
- Sites with other remains
- Sites with other remains

Dark Age Greece

After the collapse of Mycenaean civilisation during the course of the twelfth century BC Greek history enters an era of darkness, which was not totally dispelled until the middle of the eighth century. This period is 'dark' both because information is lacking, and because such information as exists indicates an extreme cultural recession, characterised by depopulation, isolation and poverty. The substantial reduction in the number and size of occupied sites is proof of widespread depopulation: indeed some areas of the Aegean have so far produced no evidence of habitation during this period. Depopulation was accompanied by regional fragmentation and isolation, as communications ceased not only within the Aegean but also with areas beyond. A significant feature of the Dark Age is the scarcity of architectural remains at most sites. This reflects the uncertainty of the times and, together with the poor quality of the other material remains, indicates the low quality of life. Except on Crete, where Bronze Age building traditions continued, graves alone supply the bulk of the evidence throughout these centuries. Technical and artistic skills, such as bronze working, writing and figured art, were also lost for a time.

The Dark Age, however, is not a period of total demoralisation. Life continued in certain areas, albeit at a much reduced level. In particular, Attica, the Argolid, parts of Thessaly and Crete managed to survive the worst difficulties of the age, and it was in these areas that the foundations of the eventual recovery of Greece were laid. New metal working technology was developed, and old skills rediscovered. Iron appears in several areas, and the cupellation of silver was undertaken at Argos and Thorikos by 900. Bronze working reappears at Lefkandi. Athens leads the rest of Greece with the development of the proto-Geometric style of pottery, from which evolved the full Geometric style from *c.* 900 onwards. Lefkandi has arguably become one of the most important sites for the elucidation of the Dark Age: here the excavation of several rich burials must modify our view of total poverty, at least from the later tenth century onwards.

With the appearance of open air sanctuaries there is also the first indication of a change in places of worship. Before 1000 BC, too, the first tentative steps were taken to colonise the Aegean with the implantation of settlements along the west coast of Asia Minor.

This evidence must not be over-emphasised. Most parts of Greece remained depressed throughout the ninth century, and full recovery did not begin until the eighth century. But then remarkable changes and advances can be noted. A substantial increase in population is evident, both from the increased number of sites and the increased size of many settlements. As communications were opened up, areas of Greece for which evidence of settlement had been lacking, were again occupied. The west coast of Asia Minor and the Aegean islands were fully colonised. Contact with the Near East, which brought fresh impetus to many aspects of life and artistic development, was intensively renewed. The colonisation of the western Mediterranean was also begun.

Graves and cemeteries continue to supply the bulk of the evidence for the eighth century, but there is important information regarding architecture from such sites as Emborio, Old Smyrna and Zagora on Andros. Their substantial remains also confirm a more settled and prosperous existence. However the defensive nature of many sites, often in inaccessible or hidden locations, and the construction of fortification walls at Old Smyrna and Zagora suggest that life was still by no means secure.

Many new sanctuaries appear during this period, and it is clear that some were gaining a reputation beyond their immediate area. About half contain remains of temples. The dedication of votive offerings at Bronze Age sites is indicative of an interest in the heroic past. With the introduction of writing from the Near East, Greece can be said to have finally put aside the Dark Age and to be emerging into the full light of history.

Greek Colonisation (Eighth to Sixth Centuries BC)

By *c.* 800 Greek traders had begun to venture beyond the Aegean with such confidence and regularity that Euboeans from Chalcis and Eretria had set up a 'trading station' (*emporion*) at Al Mina (the place called Posideion by Herodotus?) on the R.Orontes delta, excavated in the 1930s. Arguably these traders sought iron and copper above all. A comparable 'trading station' which Euboeans founded before 750 at Pithecusae in the gulf of Naples was succeeded during the latter part of the eighth century by their establishment of 'ports of call' at Zandle and Rhegium, and of settlements in fertile areas at Cumae, Leontini and Catane. Though Greeks were not blind to trading opportunities and other attractions, it was principally the prospect of good land free for occupation which prompted others to follow the Euboean example, in an effort to gain relief from the generally acute problems of increased population and unequal division of land holdings throughout Greece. Further sites on the eastern seaboard of Sicily were quickly settled, and in the seventh century these acted as the springboard for foundations on the north and south coasts of the island. In south Italy development of the same type occurred simultaneously, with settlers from Achaea taking the lead.

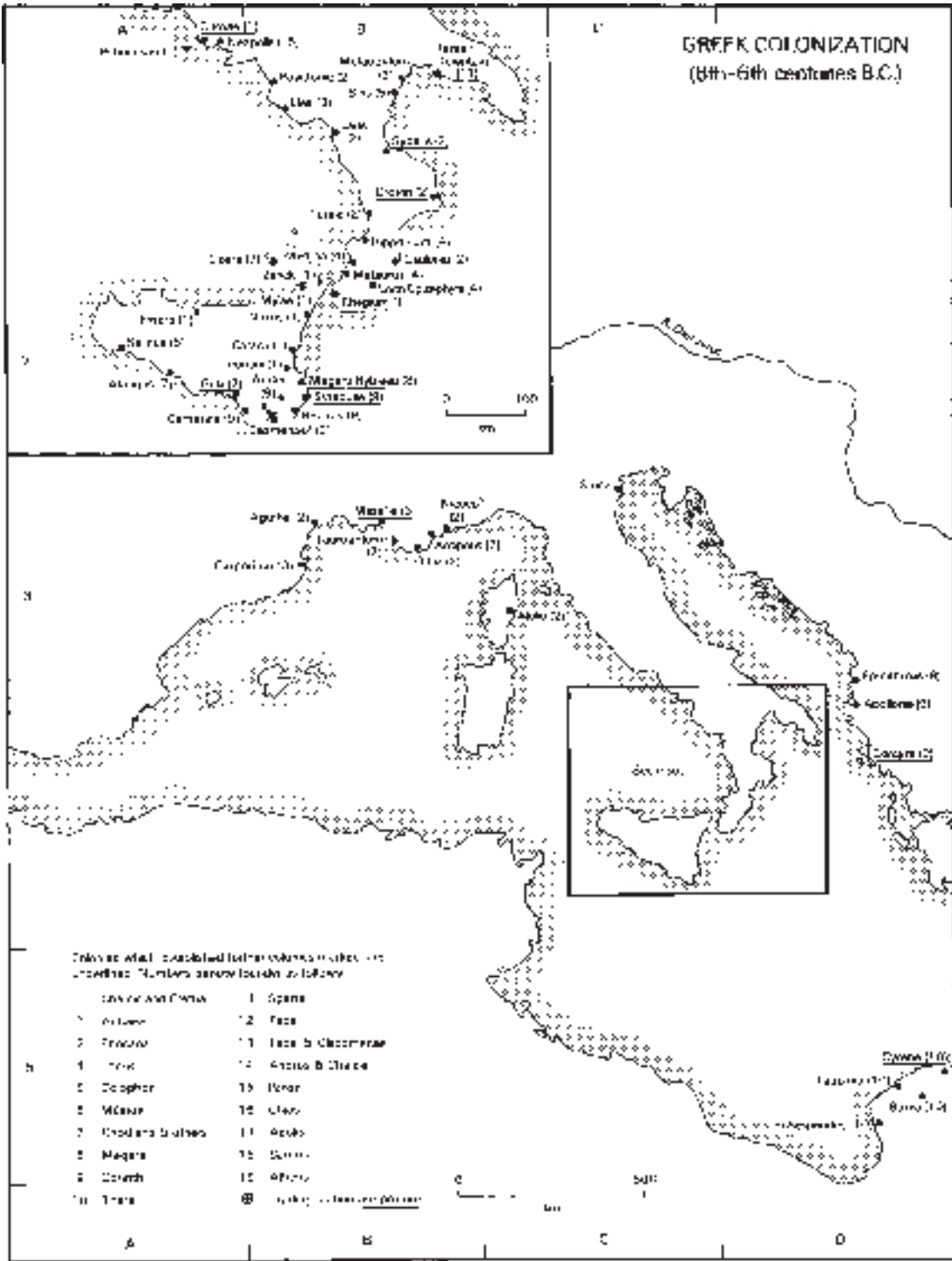
In a northerly direction it was again Euboeans who led the way with the establishment of settlements in Chalcidice during the late eighth century. In the seventh century other Greeks settled further along the northern shore of the Aegean, either side of the Hellespont, and around the Propontis. Despite its harsher climate the Black Sea was even penetrated by a few settlers at this date, but the main wave of foundations here did not come until the sixth century, mainly at the instigation of Miletus.

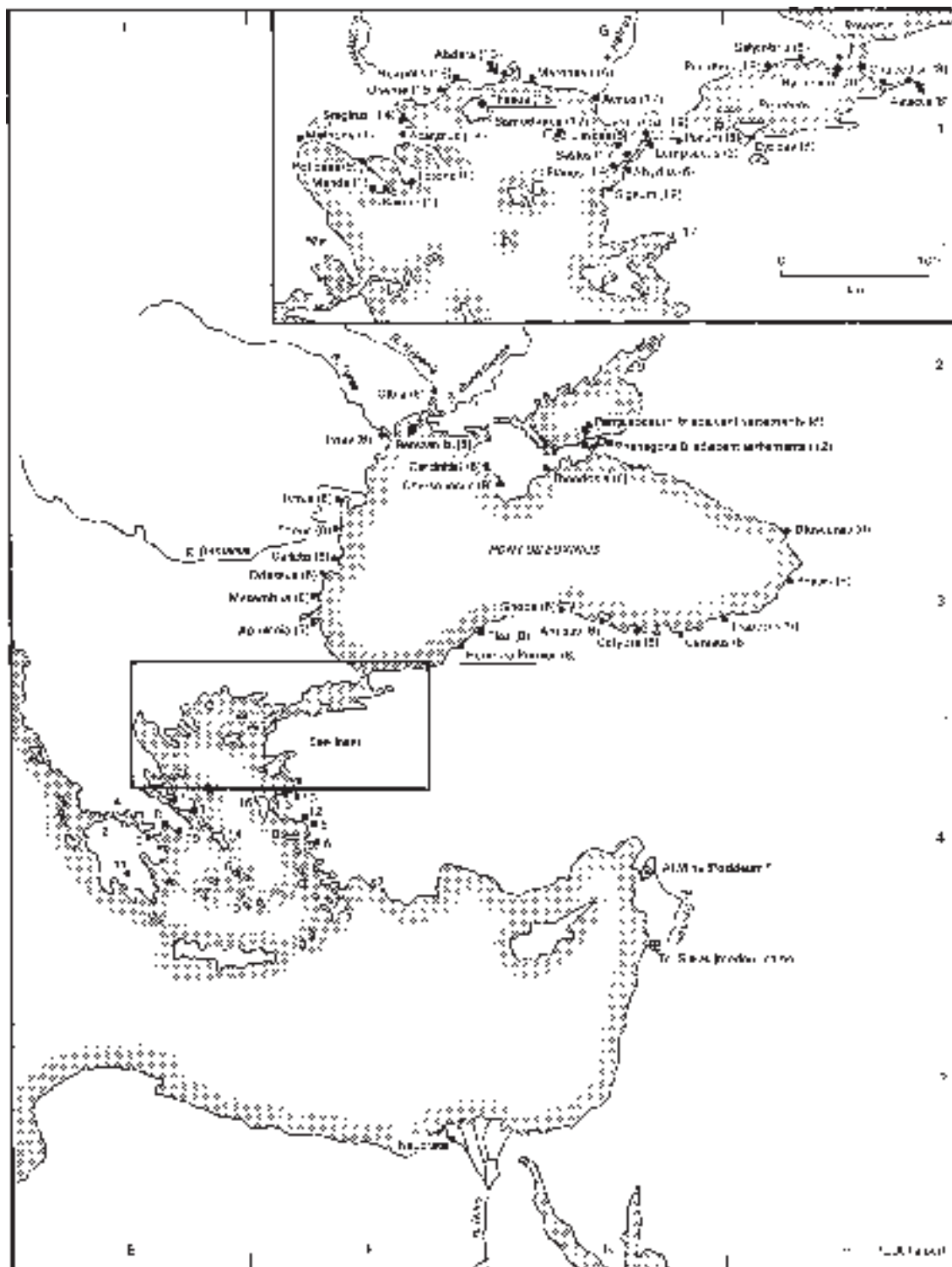
Elsewhere Greeks principally from Asia Minor were permitted to establish a 'trading station' and settlement at Naucratis, 50 miles up the Canopic branch of the Nile Delta, in the late seventh century. Cyrene near the North African coast was founded from Thera *c.* 630; later, early in the sixth century, Phocaea in Asia Minor planted settlements as far

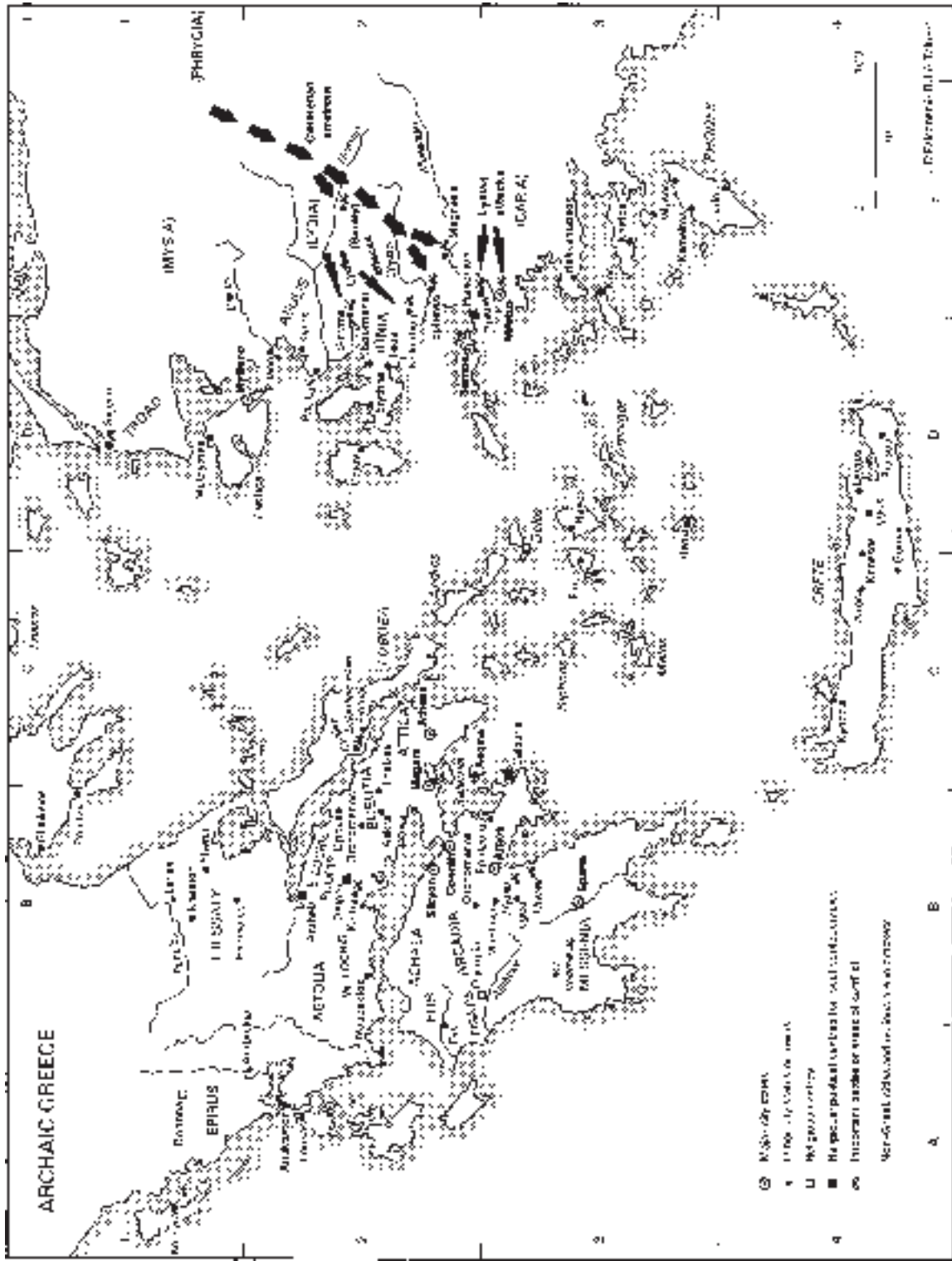
distant as southern France, Spain and Corsica. These areas, together with western Sicily, were also being settled by Phoenicians and Carthaginians. Though their motives seem to have been broadly similar to those of Greeks, hostile relations were the exception, usually the result of provocation.

The modern translation 'colony' for the Greek *apoikia* misleads if it is taken to imply any degree of long-term dependence upon, or control by, the founders from mainland Greece. Rather, from the outset the settlements were intended to be independent, self-supporting communities, whose links with their founders would in normal circumstances be no more than those of culture, religion and sentiment. Each foundation would indeed enjoy the formal sponsorship of a community, which was thus recognised as the *metropolis* or 'mother city'. This community would appoint a leader (*oikistes*), furnish ships or other help, and gather colonists, who did not necessarily have to be its own citizens. However, its positive role would often lapse at this point, even though links of the type just mentioned would always remain strong. In special circumstances, where the social or agrarian problems of a community were particularly bad, the colonists might not even be volunteers—as, for example, in the cases of the Spartan foundation of Tarentum or the Thera foundation of Cyrene.

This last instance stands out as one of the best documented colonial ventures, thanks to the survival of an inscription embodying at least the gist of an archaic record to supplement Herodotus' narrative. Among ancient authors he and Thucydides furnish the most useful information about colonisation; later writers, like Strabo, have much less of solid value to offer. Excavation and the analysis of material remains (especially pottery) have therefore played a key role in illuminating further the character and development of colonisation, even if there is a limit to what may be securely deduced from such evidence. It is frustrating that so little written material survives to deepen our insight into the major topic of the relations between colonies and the local, normally less civilised, peoples of the areas settled.







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Archaic Greece

The seventh and sixth centuries constitute an exciting formative period of the utmost importance in Greece. For the first time Greek history is now illuminated significantly by written records as well as by archaeology. Though its origins lie obscurely in the preceding Dark Age, unquestionably the emergence of the *polis* as the predominant political and social unit in Greece was a crucial step forward. Autonomous communities of this type—centred on a defensible town in control of its surrounding territory—became a distinctive feature of Greek civilisation throughout the Mediterranean and beyond.

However this is not to overlook wide variations in the speed and character of change. In many areas of Greece, especially the north and west, there was at best only a slow shift away from tribal organisation. Elsewhere Crete (see further pp. 155–6) and Sparta are distinguished by their idiosyncratic development. The latter, having at last achieved success in a struggle to conquer fertile Messenia shortly before 700, was then faced with bitter hostility not only from Messenians permanently subjected as helots, but also from jealous neighbouring states, Argos especially. A great battle at Hysiai in 669 resulted in a narrow Argive victory. During the late seventh century the strain which Sparta faced in containing a prolonged Messenian rebellion led to a permanent transformation in the character of the state: most strikingly the Spartiates, or citizen males, became an exclusive military caste. Only during the sixth century was Sparta able to extend her influence further in the Peloponnese. Checked by an initial failure to annex Tegea, she proceeded instead to forge alliances, a policy which led to the formation of the Peloponnesian League under her leadership. By the late sixth century Sparta was the strongest of the mainland states.

As seen above (pp. 13–15), the Archaic period was one of widespread expansion and of increasing prosperity through trade and settlement. Communities either side of the Aegean—like Chalkis,

Eretria, Miletus and Samos—were especially well placed to benefit, as was Crete to the south. On the Greek mainland this growth caused constant rivalry between ambitious neighbours such as Athens, Megara and Corinth. The latter built up a formidable fleet and consolidated her influence in north west Greece. She was also one of the first states where the impact of new wealth weakened the exclusive hold of a traditional landed aristocracy upon government. As a consequence of such strife (*stasis*), Corinth was seized around 655 by a single ruler or ‘tyrant’—not necessarily a pejorative term. Elsewhere too (as at Argos, Sikyon and Samos in particular) powerful tyrants established themselves for one or two generations before giving way to oligarchy or democracy. At Athens—not yet among the leading states—a political and economic crisis was alleviated in 594 by a mediator, Solon. But faction fighting persisted, so that eventually from 545, at his third attempt, Peisistratus set himself up as tyrant: he proved a wise ruler who, followed by his sons, did much to unify and stabilise Attica over 35 years, as well as to strengthen the economy. Athenian interest in Sigeion and the Thracian Chersonese, on the trade route to the Black Sea, dates from the sixth century.

On the eastern seaboard of the Aegean, the Greek cities first withstood Cimmerian incursions, and then from the 670s more persistent onslaughts by the Mermnad rulers of Lydia, a power which came to stimulate its Greek neighbours as well as to antagonise and dominate them. Coinage, for example, was a Lydian invention imitated by Greeks from about 600. The most successful military resistance was that of Miletus, arguably the greatest Greek city of the day, celebrated for its encouragement of culture and scientific enquiry as well as of colonial ventures northwards. Yet Lydia, and with it the Greek cities beyond, fell to Persia in the mid-sixth century. Thereafter Persian encroachment westwards was to make a lasting impact upon Greek history.

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