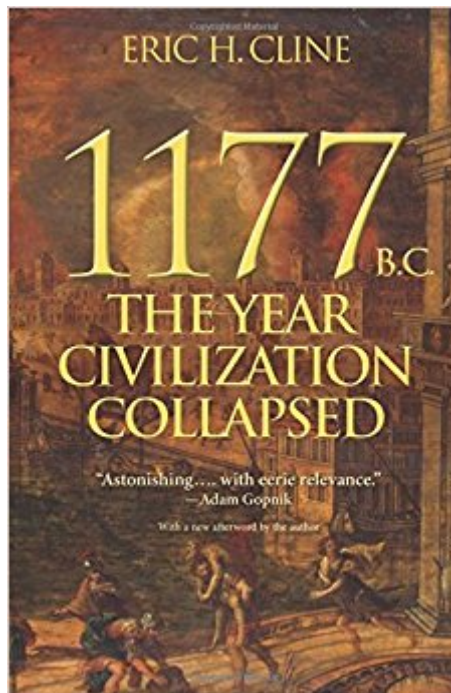




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1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed (Turning Points In Ancient History)



Synopsis

In 1177 B.C., marauding groups known only as the "Sea Peoples" invaded Egypt. The pharaoh's army and navy managed to defeat them, but the victory so weakened Egypt that it soon slid into decline, as did most of the surrounding civilizations. After centuries of brilliance, the civilized world of the Bronze Age came to an abrupt and cataclysmic end. Kingdoms fell like dominoes over the course of just a few decades. No more Minoans or Mycenaeans. No more Trojans, Hittites, or Babylonians. The thriving economy and cultures of the late second millennium B.C., which had stretched from Greece to Egypt and Mesopotamia, suddenly ceased to exist, along with writing systems, technology, and monumental architecture. But the Sea Peoples alone could not have caused such widespread breakdown. How did it happen? In this major new account of the causes of this "First Dark Ages," Eric Cline tells the gripping story of how the end was brought about by multiple interconnected failures, ranging from invasion and revolt to earthquakes, drought, and the cutting of international trade routes. Bringing to life the vibrant multicultural world of these great civilizations, he draws a sweeping panorama of the empires and globalized peoples of the Late Bronze Age and shows that it was their very interdependence that hastened their dramatic collapse and ushered in a dark age that lasted centuries. A compelling combination of narrative and the latest scholarship, 1177 B.C. sheds new light on the complex ties that gave rise to, and ultimately destroyed, the flourishing civilizations of the Late Bronze Age—and that set the stage for the emergence of classical Greece.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Winner of the 2014 Award for the Best Popular Book, American Schools of Oriental Research
One of The New York Post's Best Books of 2014
Honorable Mention for the 2015 PROSE Award in Archeology & Anthropology, Association of American Publishers
One of The Federalist's Notable Books of 2015
One of The Australian's Best Books of the Year in 2014, chosen by filmmaker Bruce Beresford
Selected as the 'Book of the Semester' Fall 2016, David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University

"The memorable thing about Cline's book is the strangely recognizable picture he paints of this very faraway time. . . . It was as globalized and cosmopolitan a time as any on record, albeit within a much smaller cosmos. The degree of interpenetration and of cultural sharing is astonishing."--Adam Gopnik, New Yorker [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-NY-Gopnik>]"A fascinating look at the Late Bronze Age, proving that whether for culture, war, economic fluctuations or grappling with technological advancement, the conundrums we face are never new, but merely renewed for a modern age."--Larry Getlen, New York Post [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-NYP-Getlen>]"Cline has created an excellent, concise survey of the major players of the time, the latest archaeological developments, and the major arguments, including his own theories, regarding the nature of the collapse that fundamentally altered the area around the Mediterranean and the Near East."--Evan M. Anderson, Library Journal [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-LibJourn-Anderson>]"Fresh and engaging."--Andrew Robinson, Current World Archaeology

"This enthralling book describes one of the most dramatic and mysterious processes in the history of mankind--the collapse of the Bronze Age civilizations. Cline walks us through events that transpired three millennia ago, but as we follow him on this intriguing sojourn, lurking in the back of our minds are tantalizing, perpetual questions: How can prosperous cultures disappear? Can this happen again; to us?"--Israel Finkelstein, coauthor of The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts

"1177 B.C. tells the story of one of history's greatest mysteries. . . . [It] is the finest account to date of one of the turning points in history."--Ian Morris, author of Why the West Rules--for Now

"The 12th century BCE is one of the watershed eras of world history. Empires and kingdoms that had dominated late Bronze Age western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean collapsed."--Choice [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-Choice>]"Cline explores a vast array of variables that could have led to the disruption of the society of this era, including earthquakes, famines, droughts, warfare, and, most notably, invasions by the 'Sea Peoples.'"--Publishers Weekly [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-PW>]"A detailed but accessible synthesis. . . . [O]ffers students and the interested lay antiquarian a sense of the rich picture that is emerging from debates among the ruins."--Scott

McLemee, Inside Higher Ed [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-IHE-McLemee>]"In this enjoyable new book, Eric H. Cline has set himself an ambitious task: Not only must he educate a popular audience about the wealth and power of the eastern Mediterranean civilizations of the Bronze Age, he must then make his readers care that, some time around the year 1200 B.C., these empires, kingdoms, and cities suffered a series of cataclysms from which they never recovered."--Susan Kristol, Weekly Standard"A wonderful example of scholarship written for the non-expert. Cline clearly pulls together the engaging story of the interactions among the major empires of the Late Bronze Age and puts forth a reasonable theory explaining why they seem to have evaporated as quickly as moisture on a hot afternoon."--Fred Reiss, San Diego Jewish World"Cline's work reveals eerie parallels between the geopolitics of the first years of 12th century B.C. and today's 21st century. 1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed is history, but reads like a good mystery novel. Cline draws readers into his tale, revealing surprises throughout. It is all the more fascinating for being true, and for its relevance to today's world."--Mark Lardas, Daily News (Galveston, TX)"Cline has written one of this year's most interesting books."--Jona Lendering, NRC Handelsblad"Extremely valuable for scholars, yet . . . easily understandable by general readers."--Richard A. Gabriel, Military History Quarterly"Cline is clearly in command of the textual record and his reading of it is the book's real strength."--A. Bernard Knapp, History Today [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-HT-Knapp>]"Written in a lively, engaging style."--Michael McGaha, Middle East Media and Book Reviews [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-MEMBR-McGaha>]"1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed is a thoughtful analysis of one of the great mysteries of human history. . . . Highly recommended."--James A. Cox, Midwest Book Review"[T]his work masterfully incorporates the present state of research into a welcome reevaluation of a period less known to the general public, the crisis of Late Bronze Age civilization. . . . [E]ven more brilliant is the spin on the similarities between the predicament of this area three millennia ago and now."--Barbara Cifola, American Historical Review [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-AHR-Cifola>]"There are few published titles which focus on the tumultuous events that took place in the Eastern Mediterranean at approximately 1200 BCE. . . . Cline's 1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed stands out among the rest as one of the best and most thoroughly researched. . . . This book is presented as a mystery novel. . . . One thing is for certain, once started, you will not want to put it down."--Ancient Origins"A gripping mystery story with clues to follow and evidence to analyze."--SG, Ancient Egypt Magazine [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-AEM-SG>]"Essential."--Thomas F. Bertonneau, Brussels Journal [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-BJ-Bertonneau>]"Well-written, very fairly argued, and excellent value, it will set the agenda for Late Bronze Age studies for some time to come."--Peter Jones, Classics for All [See full

review <http://bit.do/Cline-CFA-Jones>]"Fascinating. . . [A]voids the tedium of so many academic writers."--Bruce Beresford, filmmaker [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-Beresford>]"Eric H. Cline has written a work of great scholarship, but has written in a manner so that the non-expert . . . can not only understand, but also appreciate it."--Don Vincent, Open History"I don't know when I've appreciated a book as much as 1177 B.C. If you enjoy learning, you will enjoy this book! Highly recommended."--Thomas A. Timmes, UNRV History [See full review <http://bit.do/Cline-UNRVH-Timmes>]"Impressively marshaling the most recent archaeological and historical evidence, Eric Cline sets the record straight: there was a 'perfect storm' of migrations, rebellions, and climate change that resulted in the collapse of states that were already unstable in the Late Bronze Age. There followed an 'age of opportunity' for new kinds of political systems and ideologies that remade the world of the eastern Mediterranean in the first millennium B.C. Onward and upward with collapse!"--Norman Yoffee, University of Michigan"Cline has written a wonderfully researched and well-crafted overview of one of the most fascinating, complex, and debated periods in the history of the ancient world. Tying together an impressively broad range of disparate data, he weaves together a very convincing re-creation of the background, mechanisms, and results of the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond."--Aren Maeir, Bar-Ilan University"This book is a very valuable and very timely addition to the scholarship on the end of the Late Bronze Age. Cline provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and up-to-date treatment of one of the most dramatic and enigmatic periods in the history of the ancient world."--Trevor Bryce, author of *The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms: A Political and Military History*"This is an excellent, thought-provoking book that brings to life an era that is not well known to most readers."--Amanda H. Podany, author of *Brotherhood of Kings: How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East*"Cline expertly and briskly takes the reader through the power politics of the fifteenth, fourteenth, and thirteenth centuries BC with excursions on important archaeological discoveries and introductions for each of the major players. No reader with a pulse could fail to be captivated by the details."--Dimitri Nakassis, Mouseion"Cline's book is something special in ancient history writing. . . . The book is up to date in its research, covers a lot of ground, is careful in its conclusions, and will be referred to and cited by students of Aegean and eastern Mediterranean prehistory, discussed by the scholarly community, as well as read by the interested public. Cline has done a good job of bringing the Late Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean to a very wide audience."--Guy D. Middleton, *American Journal of Archaeology*"Remarkably prescient. . . . [A] convincing case for the relevance of ancient history to the modern world."--*Canadian Journal of History*"The end of the Late Bronze Age, around the turn of the twelfth

century BCE, was a civilizational collapse similar to the much better known fall of the Roman Empire seventeen centuries later. . . . The causes of this collapse have been among the enduring mysteries of ancient history and archaeology, a complicated detective story for which Eric Cline deftly serves as guide. Cline . . . presents for educated general readers a survey of the evidence and scholarship concerning the end of the Late Bronze Age. He also engagingly establishes the historical and geographical context of the collapse, complete with a motley and compelling cast of characters."--Matthew A. Sears, *Canadian Journal of History*"This collapse has been a popular subject for scholars, not least our author, for a very long time. Here he usefully assembles the evidence and deduces that it was the very complexity of powers, their interrelationships through trade or war, that brought about the collapse, and he is probably right."--John Boardman, *Common Knowledge*

"This enthralling book describes one of the most dramatic and mysterious processes in the history of mankind--the collapse of the Bronze Age civilizations. Cline walks us through events that transpired three millennia ago, but as we follow him on this intriguing sojourn, lurking in the back of our minds are tantalizing, perpetual questions: How can prosperous cultures disappear? Can this happen again; to us?"--Israel Finkelstein, coauthor of *"The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts"*"Impressively marshaling the most recent archaeological and historical evidence, Eric Cline sets the record straight: there was a 'perfect storm' of migrations, rebellions, and climate change that resulted in the collapse of states that were already unstable in the Late Bronze Age. There followed an 'age of opportunity' for new kinds of political systems and ideologies that remade the world of the eastern Mediterranean in the first millennium B.C. Onward and upward with collapse!"--Norman Yoffee, *University of Michigan*"Cline has written a wonderfully researched and well-crafted overview of one of the most fascinating, complex, and debated periods in the history of the ancient world. Tying together an impressively broad range of disparate data, he weaves together a very convincing re-creation of the background, mechanisms, and results of the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond."--Aren Maeir, *Bar-Ilan University*"1177 B.C." tells the story of one of history's greatest mysteries. Unknown invaders shattered the splendid civilizations of the Bronze Age Mediterranean in a tidal wave of fire and slaughter, before Egypt's pharaoh turned them back in a fierce battle on the banks of the Nile. We do not know who these attackers were, and perhaps we never will; but no archaeologist is better equipped to guide us through this dramatic story than Eric Cline. "1177 B.C." is the finest account to date of one of the turning points in history."--Ian Morris,

author of "Why the West Rules--for Now""This book is a very valuable and very timely addition to the scholarship on the end of the Late Bronze Age. Cline provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and up-to-date treatment of one of the most dramatic and enigmatic periods in the history of the ancient world."--Trevor Bryce, author of "The World of the Neo-Hittite Kingdoms: A Political and Military History""This is an excellent, thought-provoking book that brings to life an era that is not well known to most readers."--Amanda H. Podany, author of "Brotherhood of Kings: How International Relations Shaped the Ancient Near East"

[I have edited this review to correct some flaws pointed out in comments.]The other reviewers have already pointed out the book's many fine points; I agree with them that this is a book well worth reading. I had long thought that the Late Bronze Age Collapse was primarily due to the depredations of the Sea Peoples, and this book scotches that idea. Yes, the Sea Peoples played a part in it, but they may well have been just as much Effect as Cause. That is, their rampage may well have been induced by the same factors that brought down other cities. The real contribution of this book lies in the application of recent archaeological findings to the problem. Over the last few decades archaeologists have built up a steady compilation of data on the cities of the Late Bronze Age, and they have demonstrated that not all those cities were destroyed in wars. Some show evidence of having been wrecked by earthquakes; in others, the destruction is confined to the central palace and government facilities, suggesting that a popular revolt, not a foreign invasion, lay behind the destruction. Other sites, however, do show the kind of general destruction we'd expect from a victorious enemy. Especially important is the evidence they bring to bear showing that some sort of regional climate change was responsible for the at least some part of the collapse. The evidence indicates a cooler, dryer climate which would have been devastating to the cereal crops on which civilizations are dependent. The cooler climate would have led to repeated famines that would have led to revolts, migrations, and wars - all of which appear in the record of this period. However, there are two points on which I disagree with the author. The first is the author's decision not to organize the causal factors into some sort of logical pattern. Instead, he declares that all of the factors (climate change, poor harvests, migration, civil disturbance, and war) converged to create a "perfect storm" that destroyed Late Bronze Age civilization in the Near East. That struck me as overly conservative. My second objection falls on the assumption that a collapse of international trade caused by the piratical depredations of the Sea Peoples added to the collapse. The author several times refers to an 'international system' of trade, likening it to modern globalization. He even goes so far as to suggest that the societies of that time had developed such intricate trade relationships

that the disruption of those relationships helped undermine the societies. The problem arises when you think in terms of economic output. In all early societies, agricultural output constituted the vast majority of economic output. Sure, the historical records teem with stories of gems, spices, precious woods, and metals, but they attracted so much attention only because they were so rare. In terms of economic output, grain was far and away the most important component of all ancient societies. Indeed, in 1790, 90% of all laborers in the USA worked on farms. So let's keep our eyes on the ball here: grain. Trade in grain was rare and limited to emergency situations, because the transport systems of the Late Bronze Age were incapable of moving grain in bulk. The ocean-going ships of the day had cargo capacities of a few tens of tons. Grain was carried in heavy ceramic jars; a single ship could carry enough food to provide for at most a hundred people for a year. Land transportation was even worse: the inefficient wagons and poor roads of the day did not permit the carriage of large amounts of grain very far. After a few tens of miles, so much of the grain would have to go to feed the draft animals that there just wouldn't be much left at the destination. Thus, the disruption of trade would have denied rulers their luxuries, but would not have made much of a dent on the economy as a whole. A postscript to this review: the author of the book, Eric Cline, has graciously responded to my criticisms and finally gotten through my thick head a point that, while not mentioned in this review, came up in the exchange of comments. He has taken a lot of his time to straighten me out, and I deeply appreciate his patience with my errors.

There are so many theories concerning the end of the Bronze Age that a description and discussion of the theories was really needed. This book presents a coherent and highly readable outline of the period, setting it into its historical milieu.. Dr. Cline proposes some interesting parallels between 1177BC and the present which should give us all pause. I read this book all in one sitting, even at dinner. I could not put it down.

This is a subject that ought to fill the reader with the feeling of "gosh-wow!" about how close to our own world and yet so very different was the world of the Late Bronze Age. The Bronze Age was Civilization 1.0 - the first draft of civilization. It was successful and flourishing and in many ways very much like our own. Then - suddenly - the slate was wiped virtually clean, and a new civilization - Civilization 2.0 - which would lead to our own - entered the stage of world history. Eric Cline in 1177 B.C. does a great job of setting the stage for the reader to appreciate and understand the destruction of Late Bronze Age civilization. The book is fairly slim, and a pretty quick read. Cline takes the reader back a few centuries from the mysterious 12th Century BC destruction of the

Bronze Age world. Cline introduced the reader to Bronze Age civilization at its height, when commerce was globalized and a network of royal marriage alliances tied together empires and kingdoms from Egypt to the Hittite empire to Mycenaea. Cline tells his story by referring to the many pieces of royal correspondence that archeologists have managed to uncover in the ruined cities of forgotten empires. It is a "gosh-wow" fact that we are able to read the correspondence between royalty more than 3,000 years after the fact. And yet there is so much we don't know. One of those things is "what happened?" In the space of virtually no time, the mighty Hittite empire was destroyed, leaving nothing but a bare memory in some biblical references. Mycenaea was likewise completely destroyed, as were other empires and kingdoms of the epoch, e.g., Babylonia, Minoa, the Ugarit Kingdom, and Assyria, many of which disappeared so completely that they did not leave a memory behind, until their massive constructions were unearthed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Similarly, the Canaanite civilization disappeared to be recovered under the new management of the Hebrews and Philistines. Egypt survived in a much reduced form after fighting off the onslaughts of Sea Peoples, but in weaker and much reduced form. The mode of destruction of Civilization 1.0 seems to have varied from region to region. Some cities seem to have suffered from earthquakes and to not have been repaired. The Hittite and Canaanite cities seem to have been destroyed by fire and/or war, or they were abandoned before the end. Cline rejects the notion of an invasion by the enigmatic Sea Peoples as the complete answer to the destruction of the Late Bronze Age world. It's not clear that there was such an invasion. The Egyptians describe the Sea Peoples - who attacked in 1207 and 1177 (from which Cline gets his ultimate year of "1177 B.C.") On the other hand, there is a panicky letter from Ugarit about some unknown ships threatening Ugarit, but the letter doesn't say who the ships were. Perhaps they were a rebel group from his own country; perhaps they were from Cyprus; perhaps they were the Sea People. We just don't know. Cline argues for a "system failure" in which a "perfect storm" of events - earthquake, economic decline, invasion, the loss of a major component of the world system - caused the entire system to go into decline. Cline does a good job of canvassing the various culprits for the LBA ("Late Bronze Age") collapse and makes effective arguments for why single factor explanations are not persuasive. The book is chock-a-block full of interesting "gosh-wow!" observations. For example, Cline repeatedly references the point that Troy was on the frontier between Mycenaea and the Hittite Empire, and, so, the Trojan War may have been a brush fire war, akin to Vietnam, between the great powers of Mycenaea and the Hittite Empire. Another "gosh-wow!" point that I've filed away is that the coalition of rebellious western kingdoms - to the west of Hatti in Asia Minor - was the "Assuwa," from which we get the word for "Asia," which has progressively been extended ever-eastward. Another bit of "gosh-wow!" is Cline's

mention that by 1177 BC, the pyramids were already 1,000 years old. If that doesn't give the reader a feeling for the deep time of history, nothing will. Still another one was Cline's observation that the dissemination of the classic stories of the Ancient Near East might have been through sailors swapping stories in bars as they waited for the "toffs" to finish the diplomatic niceties on state visits://Such transfers of ideas undoubtedly took place not only at the upper levels of society, but also at the inns and bars of the ports and cities along the trade routes in Greece, Egypt, and the Eastern Mediterranean. Where else would a sailor or crew member while away the time waiting for the wind to shift to the proper quarter or for a diplomatic mission to conclude its sensitive negotiations, swapping myths, legends, and tall tales? Such events may perhaps have contributed to cultural influences spreading between Egypt and the rest of the Near East, and even across the Aegean. Such an exchange between cultures could possibly explain the similarities between the Epic of Gilgamesh and Homer's later Iliad and Odyssey, and between the Hittite Myth of Kumarbi and Hesiod's later Theogony. //Cline, Eric H. (2014-03-23). 1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed (Turning Points in Ancient History) (p. 59). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition. This book didn't answer all my questions about the LBA. Honestly, what it did was inflame my interest in the subject just that much more, and make me want to visit the sites he mentions, but that's the subject of a different story.

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