

WORKING HARD OR HARDLY WORKING: FARM LABOR IN LATE BRONZE AGE GREECE



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At this moment, the US is experiencing massive changes in the labor force. Technology, social issues, health and safety, and the gendered nature of work are all intertwined with something we usually only hear of as a number – the unemployment rate. It should come as no surprise that this has always been the case. This talk addresses changes to the nature of work and the labor force in Late Bronze Age Greece (c. 1400-1200 BCE). Archaeological and documentary evidence suggest that, at this time, there were significant changes in farm technology, such as the widespread adoption of the oxen-driven plow. Plow technology would have changed the approach to farming in ways that resonated deeply in Greek society, including causing large-scale unemployment and shifting the sexual division of labor in ways that may have continued to ripple through Greek society into the historical period.