

THE AHHIYAWA QUESTION: PROVIDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE
INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN THE HITTITES AND THE MYCENAEANS.

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ABSTRACT

Ana M. Wagner: The Ahhiyawa Question: Providing Archaeological Evidence for the interconnection between the Hittites and the Mycenaeans
(Under the direction of G. Kenneth Sams)

The question of whether or not the Hittite term ‘Ahhiyawa’ refers to the Mycenaeans in Greece — particularly the Achaeans — has long been debated. There is clear evidence for the interaction between these two cultures, as seen in the material evidence, and linguistically, the term ‘Ahhiyawa’ is not dissimilar to the Greek ‘Achaea;’ the material and linguistic study of the connections between the Hittites and the Mycenaeans has therefore led scholars from several backgrounds to argue that the Ahhiyawa “kingdom” was that of the Mycenaeans. This paper analyzes both the linguistic and material evidence for the interconnections between these two cultures, but is more heavily focused on the material evidence, in the hopes of determining whether or not the Ahhiyawa Kingdom was that of the Mycenaeans, and attempt to place Ahhiyawa geographically.

To my incredible parents — for all that they are,
and for always, unconditionally, believing in me.

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Review of the Literature and Current State of Scholarship

Almost a century after it was introduced, the scholarship on the Ahhiyawa Question — or The Ahhiyawa Problem — has yet to come to a definitive conclusion, despite the mounting evidence in favour of the term Ahhiyawa referring to the Mycenaeans.

The question goes back to 1911, when Luckenbill suggested a link between ‘Alaksandu’ in the Ahhiyawa texts and Alexander/Paris, the legendary Trojan prince.¹ A few decades later, in 1924, Emil Forrer tentatively linked Ahhiyawa to the Mycenaeans of Late Bronze Age mainland Greece, namely, the Achaeans.² Forrer endorsed Luckenbill’s theory, and strengthened it by identifying other names relating to the Trojan War with the Ahhiyawa Tablets. These included identifying the island of Lesbos with the Hittite text ‘Lazpa;’ Troy with ‘Wilusa’ and ‘Taruisa;’ and the legendary Greek hero Atreus with ‘Attarissiya.’³

Although this theory is the most popular one to this day, there has been strong opposition since its development. The most vocal of these opponents was Ferdinand Sommer, who published a comprehensive volume with translations of the Ahhiyawa texts and his

¹ Luckenbill 1911.

² Beckman et al. 2011: 1.

³ Forrer 1924.

interpretations of them, disagreeing with the majority of Forrer's suggestions, arguing that the term 'Ahhiyawa' simply referred to an Anatolian state.⁴ Since then, the debate has gone back and forth, with prominent scholars, such as Huxley and Steiner, joining the discussion.⁵ In recent years, a survey on the current state of affairs has been published,⁶ as well as a book containing all of the inscriptions mentioning the term Ahhiyawa.⁷

As Cline has repeatedly stated, if the Ahhiyawans equate to the Mycenaeans, then there is substantial textual evidence for contact between the Hittites and Mycenaeans throughout the Late Bronze Age.⁸ If, however, the term Ahhiyawa does not refer to the Mycenaeans, then not only are the Mycenaeans — an important culture at the time — not mentioned by the Hittite texts, but moreover, by default we are left with an important “textually attested” Late Bronze Age ‘state’ of Ahhiyawa, for which there is no archaeological evidence whatsoever.⁹ Since it seems highly unlikely that these two great states would not have been in contact, and furthermore that the impressive state of Ahhiyawa would leave behind no visible archaeological trace, it seems essentially by default that these two terms must be one and the same, equating the Ahhiyawans with the Mycenaeans (see Fig. 1 for placement of Ahhiyawa with relation to the Hittite Empire). The next question to consider then, is which Mycenaeans, or what part of the Mycenaean empire, the term “Ahhiyawa” refers to.

⁴ Bryce 1989: 297.

⁵ Huxley 1960; Steiner 1964.

⁶ Fischer 2010.

⁷ Beckman et al. 2011.

⁸ 1996: 145; 1994: 69.

⁹ Beckman et al. 2011: 3.

Which Mycenaeans?

The Mycenaean world, much like the Hittite world, was large and not continuously unified during the centuries of the Late Bronze Age.¹⁰ Ahhiyawa has been placed by scholars in Rhodes, Cilicia, Thrace, Anatolia, and elsewhere in the Mediterranean region, yet these options have been narrowed down by the claim that Ahhiyawa is “across the sea” or reached “via the islands,” allowing no room for Ahhiyawa to be on the Anatolian Mainland.¹¹ While Ahhiyawa is primarily identified with the Greek Mainland, where the Mycenaean civilization arises, the term might encompass all the regions settled by this culture or under their control, in which case the landscape would be much broader, including the Greek Mainland, the Islands, and Miletus. Kelder supports this theory, arguing that Ahhiyawa was a “Great Kingdom” composed of essentially the entire Mycenaean world, and believes that it was ruled from the well-known Mycenaean site of Mycenae. While the former part of his argument is convincing, the latter is not, since it is very unlikely that this entire region could have been under the control of a single king. Furthermore, the Mycenaean Linear B documents — administrative texts detailing mainly with economic transactions — do not support the existence of a single ruler, or *wanax*.¹²

Although it is likely that Ahhiyawa refers to a conglomerate of several Mycenaean kingdoms, the Hittite texts refer to a single “Great King,” which complicates the picture

¹⁰ Although the chronology for the start of the Late Bronze Age is problematic, the “Middle Chronology” ranges from the 17th century B.C.E to the mid 11th century B.C.E

¹¹ Hawkins 1998: 30-31; Beckman et al. 2011: 3.

¹² Kelder 2006: 135-138.

provided.¹³ In the ‘*Tawagalawa* Letter’ — likely dating to the reign of Hattusili III — the ruler of Ahhiyawa is designated as a ‘Brother’ of the King of Hatti, and as a “Great King:” a title that was only bestowed upon the most powerful rulers of the ancient world (such as the Kings of Assyria, Egypt, and Hatti itself). It is possible that the Ahhiyawa referred to in the Hittite texts was a force unified under one *wanax*, who would be considered the “Great King” to the Hittites, while the other *wanakates* (*wanaktes*?) of each individual state were considered as lesser kings to the Hittite authorities.¹⁴

While there is no archaeological evidence for this except the remarkable cultural and political uniformity of the Greek Mainland,¹⁵ there is a famous literary precedent for this theory: the Trojan war, and Homer’s *Iliad*. Since an in-depth discussion of this literary work is beyond the scope of this paper, it should be sufficient to state that although the work was not written until the eighth century B.C.E and cannot be used as ‘historical’ evidence in general, the Catalogue of Ships is regarded by scholars as an authentic portion, reflecting Bronze Age realities.¹⁶

It is possible and plausible, therefore, that Ahhiyawa was a reference by the Hittites to some or all of the Mycenaean world of the Late Bronze Age. There is plentiful archaeological

¹³ Beckman et al. 2011: 6.

¹⁴ Beckman et al. 2011: 6.

¹⁵ The vast majority of the preserved Linear B records provide a strong impression that palatial administration throughout Late Bronze Age Greece was highly uniform with the use of the same language, terminology, system of taxation, and distribution (Kelder 2010: 9-10; Shelmerdine 1999b; Olivier 1984; for the uniformity of language, see Chadwick 1976; for terminology and systems of taxation, Vermeule 1957, 200).

¹⁶ Beckman et al. 2011: 5.

evidence aside from the Hittite texts that demonstrates contact between these two cultures, which will be discussed next, providing a few prominent examples of Mycenaean culture in Anatolia.

Mycenaean Material Culture in Anatolia

Mycenaean pottery has been found in significant quantities in most coastal regions of the eastern Mediterranean (Fig. 2). The earliest comprehensive study of the material was presented by C. Mee in 1978. Subsequent publications draw heavily on Mee's work and publications by Mellink. Mee categorized the sites into six geographical regions:

- 1) the area north of the Gediz/Hermus ("North-West Anatolia")
- 2) the area between the Maeander and the Gediz ("Western Anatolia")
- 3) the region south of the Maeander ("South-West Anatolia")
- 4) the "south coast with the lakes"
- 5) "Cilicia," and
- 6) "Central Anatolia."¹⁷

Although numerous sites contain Mycenaean artifacts, a select few, which have been well published and have yielded considerable results, will be analyzed below.¹⁸

North-West Anatolia

Troy — Hissarlik

¹⁷ Mee 1978: 121-155.

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion of other sites that yielded Mycenaean artifacts, see Kelder 2006.

In North-West Anatolia only one site shows a considerable amount of Mycenaean pottery: the mound of Hissarlik, or Troy (Fig. 3). Mycenaean pottery is first attested in Troy VI_d, contemporary with LH IIA, and continues until LH IIIC (Fig. 4).¹⁹ Although Troy is customarily related to the Mycenaeans through the *Iliad*, there is clear archaeological evidence supporting the theory that the Trojans were well acquainted with the Mycenaeans, or at the very least, their material culture.

Forty percent of the Mycenaean pottery at the site dates to the LH IIIA2 period, yet Mycenaean wares comprise only a fraction of the total assemblage of pottery at the site.²⁰ The excavations have produced at least 500 ‘ceramic units,’ according to Van Wijngaarden, and the majority of this pottery was likely produced in Troy, or at least has an east Aegean or west Anatolian provenance.²¹ Chemical analysis suggests that the imported Mycenaean pottery from the site came mainly from Boeotia, with smaller numbers coming in from Attica.²²

The fact that much of the Mycenaean pottery seems to be locally produced is significant as it indicates that these wares were used in domestic contexts and not seen as particularly rare or valuable.²³ The pottery mostly has a linear or patterned decoration — with the notable exception of an LH IIIC krater with a pictorial decoration of a lion and a bird — and the wares range from open to closed shapes, including goblets, kylikes, bowls, and cups.²⁴ Traditionally, closed shapes

¹⁹ Mee 1970; Mountjoy 1997: 292.

²⁰ Mee 1978.

²¹ Van Wijngaarden 1999: 498; Mountjoy 1998: 33-67; Kelder 2006: 54

²² Kelder 2006: 54.

²³ Kelder 2006: 76.

²⁴ Kelder 2006: 55.

are more common at sites where the pottery is imported, whereas open shapes are more common at Mycenaean settlements.²⁵ Containers such as stirrup jars and flasks are present in good quantities at Troy, and the ratio of open to closed shapes is 1:1, indicating that although some Mycenaean settlements may have been present at Troy, there would not have been an extensive settlement.²⁶

Troy remains the focal point of study of the Mycenaean influence in the north-western part of Anatolia. The city itself, but also its harbour and cemetery have yielded a large number of sherds. Although it is unclear the degree to which these sherds were real Mycenaean imports or local produce in a Mycenaean style, it is certain that Mycenaean influence must have been felt strongly.

Western Anatolia

Bayraklı — Old Smyrna and Izmir

Several sherds were discovered during the excavations at Old Smyrna in 1951, although these were found in unstratified conditions, as strays in Prehistoric and Protogeometric levels.²⁷ Based on the decoration of lines and spirals of four of these sherds, one was dated to LH IIIA2, although the shape of the vessel remains largely unknown. Other sherds included an LH IIIA2b kylix stem, as well as a false neck and shoulder of a LH IIIB stirrup jar. Thus, although from an unstratified context, these sherds all date to the LH III period, albeit to different subdivisions within it.²⁸

²⁵ Kelder 2006: 76.

²⁶ Mee 1978: 146.

²⁷ Kelder 2006: 57

²⁸ Cook 1951: 104-105; Mee 1978: 143.

At Izmir, a Mycenaean sword was discovered, also from an unstratified context, that is thought to have come from a tomb.²⁹ Mee proposes an LH I date for the sword, linking it to the ‘rapiers’ found at the shaft graves at Mycenae.³⁰ Although not much else has been found at Izmir, Kelder (2006) optimistically notes that the Bronze Age levels at the site seem “scarcely touched upon” and that more Mycenaean material awaits to be unearthed.

Clazomenae — Urla İskelesi — Liman Tepe

Although the Western Anatolian sites of Old Smyrna and Izmir provide little evidence to indicate a Mycenaean settlement in this region, other sites in the region, such as Clazomenae, display a greater Mycenaean presence. Clazomenae provides sufficient archaeological evidence that it may have been settled by Mycenaean, albeit to a limited scale.³¹ The site yielded Minyan ware as well as Mycenaean pottery, from the LH IIIA1 to LH IIIB periods. The shapes of the vessels range from open to closed including cups, jugs and an alabastron.³² Although neither these shapes nor the chronological distribution of pottery found at the site is remarkable, the Mycenaean pottery was found in association with Grey Minyan ware in several houses, indicating that it was used together with Anatolian material, in a domestic setting.³³ Accordingly, it is reasonable to conclude that Mycenaean pottery was not a luxury good at Clazomenae, since it was widely used in quotidian life.

²⁹ Mee 1978: 130.

³⁰ Mee 1978: 130.

³¹ Mee 1978: 148.

³² Kelder 2006: 58.

³³ Kelder 2006: 64.

South-West Anatolia

Iasos

In South-West Anatolia, the Mycenaean (and earlier Minoan) influence at Iasos is unquestionable. During the Late Bronze Age, Iasos must have been an important Mycenaean centre. Mycenaean settlements must have settled here at least as early as LH IIIA2.³⁴ Although only a limited area of the LBA centre has been excavated, a considerable amount of Mycenaean pottery has been found, dating to LH IIIA2 or IIIB. Some of the sherds may have been produced locally or somewhere in East Aegean- West Anatolia, but there was also imported ware, likely from the Argolid.³⁵ The shapes are of a wide variety, including deep bowls, kylikes, mugs, stemmed bowls, kraters, and even a flask.³⁶ The decoration contains an abundance of pictorial and patterned motifs, including spirals, wavy lines, zigzags, flowers, whorl shells, and even an octopus; no purely linear decoration is attested.³⁷

There was also evidence of Mycenaean architecture, although very little is known. Scant remains of Mycenaean walls were unearthed, heavily disturbed by later archaic building activity.³⁸ The remains represent a rather large building, comprised of walls with worked stone, and with paved floors. The building seems to have been in use from as early as the MM III period to the LM III period.

³⁴ Mellink 1983: 139.

³⁵ Mee 1979: 130.

³⁶ Mee 1979: 130.

³⁷ Kelder 2006: 62.

³⁸ Kelder 2006: 61.

The site, therefore, has a long history of influence and settlement from the west. Imported Minoan pottery from LM I and II, as well as local imitations of Minoan forms suggest that Iasos was strongly influenced, or perhaps even settled by the Minoans, prior to the arrival and consequent settlement of the Mycenaeans.

Miletus

Known in Hittite texts as Millawanda or Millawata, Miletus is often seen as the major foothold of Ahhiyawa on Anatolian soil, and has long been recognized as a Mycenaean settlement. Originally a Minoan colony or settlement much like Iasos, Miletus became Mycenaean during the LH IIB period, at least in cultural respect, and became a fully integrated part of the Mycenaean world. The site has been identified several times in the Linear B texts, testifying to its importance.³⁹ Along with Troy, the site is listed in Van Wijngaarden's catalogue as a 'class 5' site, with over 500 Mycenaean sherds. The earliest Mycenaean pottery found at Miletus dates to LH IIB, the period following the last Minoan settlement at Miletus.⁴⁰

Architectural remains differing from the previous architecture, dating to the same time period as the earliest Mycenaean pottery, were also uncovered. These tend to have a more rectangular outline, with clear Mycenaean parallels elsewhere, instead of the trapezoidal ground plans from the earlier period.⁴¹ It must be noted, however, that despite the sudden appearance of these Mycenaean artifacts, Minoan elements are still present in this layer. For example, a good

³⁹ Chadwick 1976: 80.

⁴⁰ Niemeier 1998: 42; Niemeier 2005.

⁴¹ Niemeier 1998: 30.

portion of the pottery from this period seems to be Minoan rather than Mycenaean, and kilns of Minoan type have been found dating to this later architectural phase.⁴² This evidence suggests that the original (Minoan) inhabitants did not leave when the Mycenaeans arrived, but instead lived side by side with the newly arrived settlers.

Unfortunately, the pottery from Miletus has been poorly published and the ratio of Mycenaean and Anatolian ware is not known. It seems, however, that Mycenaean wares were more common than Anatolian ones by a significant degree, “overshadowing the Anatolian material.”⁴³ Therefore, although the need for a thorough analysis of the pottery at this important site still exists, there is little doubt that Miletus was a major, if not the major centre of the Mycenaeans in Anatolia during the Late Bronze Age.

Central Anatolia

The evidence for Mycenaean influence in Central Anatolia is sparse yet convincing. In contrast to the West coast, the pottery in the interior of Anatolia is — as seen at sites such as Sardis and Aphrodisias — predominantly Mycenaean in style but locally made, demonstrating the popularity of Mycenaean-style vessels.⁴⁴ There are, however, a number of imported Mycenaean sherds reported at Guvartepe,⁴⁵ a single sherd at Beycesultan,⁴⁶ pyxides and a jug from a cemetery at Düver, a piriform jar and a pyxis at Dereköy, and a kylix sherd at

⁴² Niemeier 1998: 31.

⁴³ Kelder 2006: 74; Niemeier 1998, 33.

⁴⁴ Mee 1998: 141; For Sardis, see Mee 1978; for Aphrodisias, see Marchese 1978.

⁴⁵ Boysal 1967.

⁴⁶ Mellaart 1970: 63-65.

Beylerbey.⁴⁷ In addition to these sites, a single Mycenaean kylix stem has been discovered and published at Boğazköy, yet its unusual decoration leads Genz to suggest that the sherd may reveal a local production on the West Coast of Asia Minor (*“könnte für eine lokale Produktion im Bereich der kleinasiatischen Westküste sprechen”*).⁴⁸ Genz also notes sherds found at Maşat Hüyük, Bügelkannen, Tille Hüyük and Kuşaklı, but mentions them only briefly, with little detail.⁴⁹

The Konya-Karaman region

Bahar and Koçak’s Konya survey, published in 2004, provides evidence for wares with Mycenaean features found at eleven sites: Zoldura, İbrahim Dede, Tekintaş, Hatip Kale, Dineksaray, Okçu, Sirnik, Köydağı, Doğu Güvenç, Çiçek, and Süleyman Hacı.⁵⁰ These wares are inspired by Mycenaean designs and shapes, but are locally made, as seen at Aphrodisias and Sardis. Of the eleven (Twelve?) sites, Zoldura, Dineksaray, Sirnik, Okçu, Hatip Kale, and İslihisar (not previously mentioned in the above eleven sites) contain what Bahar and Koçak describe as “Mycenae origin findings.”⁵¹ Based on the original Turkish in the rest of the survey and the authors’ own summary, one can presume that the authors here refer to imported wares, as opposed to locally produced imitations of Mycenaean wares; furthermore, one can confidently presume that although the English summary refers to the site of Mycenae specifically, the

⁴⁷ Mee 1998: 141.

⁴⁸ Genz 2004: 79.

⁴⁹ Genz 2004: 78-80.

⁵⁰ Bahar and Koçak 2004: 92.

⁵¹ Bahar and Koçak 2004: 92.

authors here meant Mycenaean pottery more broadly — the Turkish, Myken, is identical. While the eleven (twelve?) sites comprise only four percent of the surveyed settlements, Bahar and Koçak confidently state that the presence of Mycenaean wares in these settlements displays the affection of the Mycenaean culture in the area and note that it is an important factor that it was so widespread in the inland of Anatolia.⁵²

⁵² Bahar and Koçak 2004: 92.

Analysis

Mycenaean wares, mainly pottery, reached the shores of Anatolia in the early 14th century, and are present well into the 12th century B.C.E. Although the material ranges from LH II to LH IIIC, the most common styles among imports are LH IIIA2 and LH IIIB1. The majority of sites with Mycenaean material are found in the central-western and south-western regions, with the largest concentrations at Miletus. At Iasos, Minoan and later Mycenaean influence is unquestionable, although there is no clear evidence for an actual settlement. Although North-West Anatolia only has one site with a considerable Mycenaean presence, the Mycenaean corpus at the site of Troy is second only to Miletus on the Anatolian mainland. At Troy, Mycenaean pottery seems to have been the only Mycenaean element in the local society, as the site does not display Mycenaean architecture or burial practices. In Western Anatolia, both Old-Smyrna and Izmir display a degree of Mycenaean influence, although the Bronze Age levels have been insufficiently excavated, and thus at the present, finds of Mycenaean origin are too scarce to propose that there might have been a Mycenaean settlement. In the same region, however, Clazomenae, shows evidence that Mycenaean could have settled here. Although not discussed above, a few pieces of Mycenaean pottery have been found on the south coast of Anatolia, indicating that the pottery likely arrived here through trade, as opposed to close contact or influence with the Mycenaean. Although the evidence from Central Anatolia is not very detailed, there can be no doubt from the numerous sites with both imported Mycenaean wares

and local imitation wares that like Western Anatolia, Central Anatolia also displays a degree of Mycenaean influence.

As the survey above demonstrates, it is reasonable to assume that Miletus and its surrounding area served as the focus of contacts between the Mycenaean world and Anatolia. There is also strong evidence that the Hittites were not only cognizant of the Mycenaeans, but were in fact in contact with them, and in some cases, living alongside them. Mycenaean goods in Anatolia spread through gradual diffusion as a result of local exchange, and although scarce, they even reach inland Anatolia.

Conclusions

The question of whether the Hittites were in contact with the Greeks cannot be further doubted, as there is clear archaeological and textual evidence to indicate that these two great cultures were cognizant of each other. It is as likely, therefore, that Ahhiyawa in the Hittite texts refers to the Mycenaeans, as it is implausible that although these two great powers in the Late Bronze Age were in contact with each other, there would be no literary evidence for this exchange in the Hittite texts, which are numerous and detailed in a plethora of subjects. This paper has summarized the textual debate on the Ahhiyawa question, and detailed several important sites from Anatolia that display evidence of contact between the Mycenaeans in Greece and the Hittites in Anatolia. There is both the textual and material evidence for the interconnections between these two cultures, and since there is neither any mention of another entity which might be the Mycenaeans, nor is there material evidence for an “Ahhiyawa” in Anatolia, it is evident that not only were these two in contact, but that the Hittite term Ahhiyawa must refer to the Mycenaeans.

FIGURES

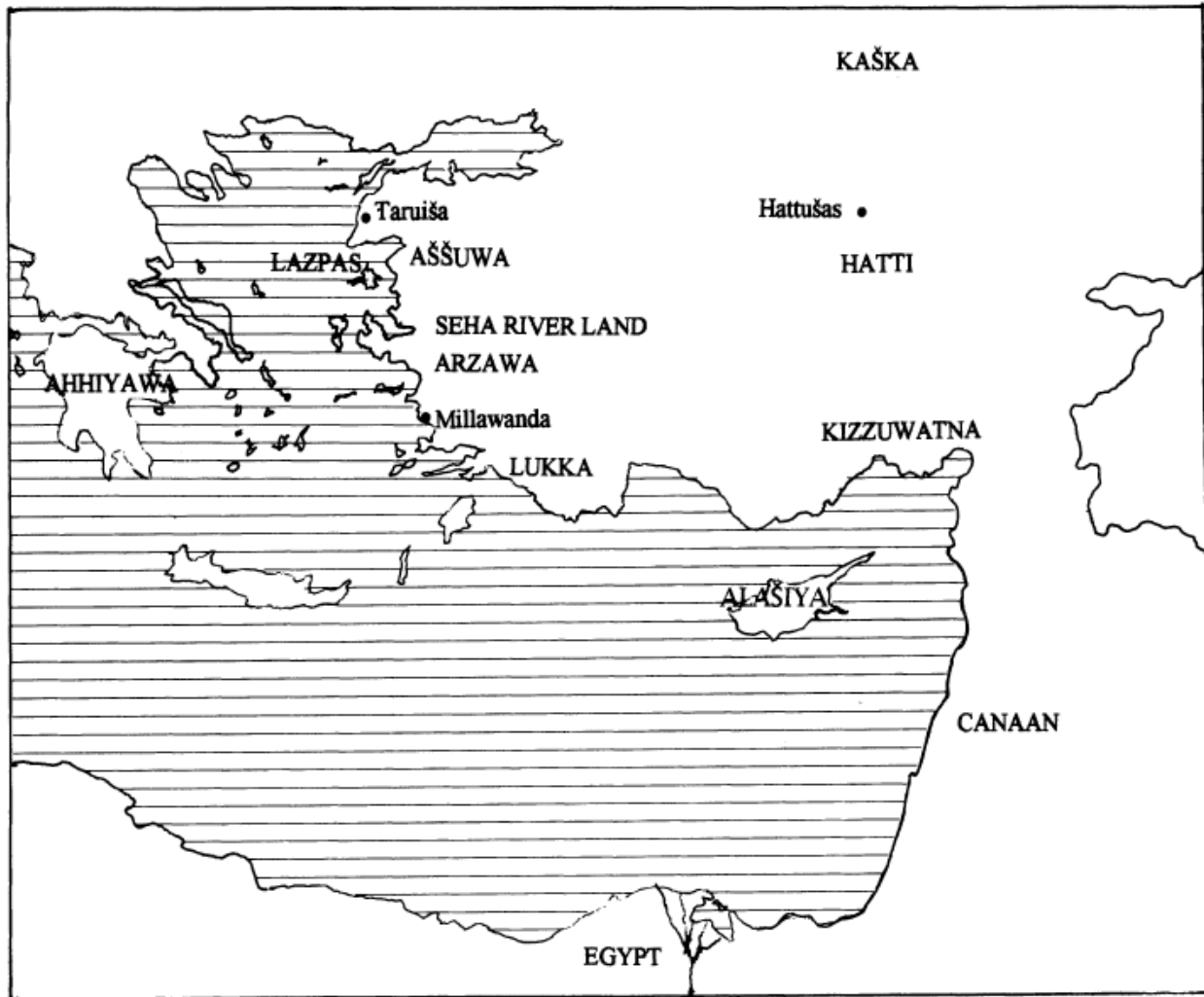


Fig. 1- Map of Anatolian and Greek region in the 15th-13th centuries B.C.E (Cline 1996).



Fig. 2- Sites with Mycenaean pottery (Kelder 2006: 50).

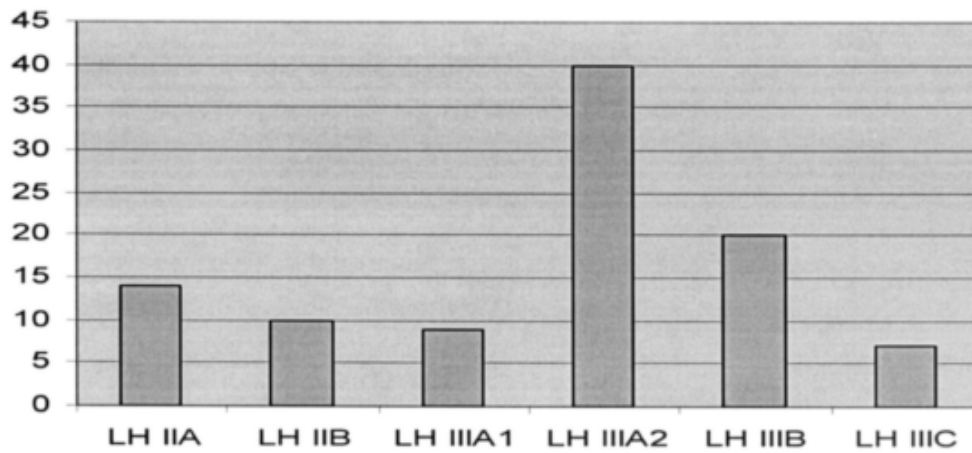


Fig. 3- Chart with Chronological distribution of Mycenaean Pottery at Troy (Mee 1970).

Site name	II	IIIA1	IIIA2	IIIB1	IIIB2	IIIC	Total*
TROY-HISSARLIK	x	x	x	x	x	x	5
BESIK TEPE			x	x	x	x	2
PITANE						x	2?
ELAIA							1
PANAZTEPE			x	x			3
PHOCAIA					x		2?
ÇERKES				x			1
EGRİKÖY							?
LARISA						x	1
BAYRAKLI			x	x			2
CLAZOMENAE			x	x	x	x	3
REISDERE							1
TORBALI		x	x	x	x	x	3?
EPHESUS		x	x			x	3
SARDIS					x	x	2
GAVURTEPE			x				2
BEYCESULTAŃ			x	x			1
SARAKÖY							1
MILETUS	x	x	x	x	x	x	5
AKBÜK					x	x	1
IASOS	x	x	x	x	x	x	3
MYLASA	x	x	x				1
STRATONICAEA						x	1
MÜSGEBI			x	x	x	x	4
KNIDOS							1
DUVER				x	x		1
TELMESSOS				x	x		1
DEREKÖY				x	x		1
BEYLERBEY				x			1

* Amount of Mycenaean finds: 1=1-10; 2=10-50; 3=50-100; 4=100-500; 5=500 and more.

Fig. 4- Sites in Western Anatolia with Mycenaean Pottery From LH II- LH IIIC (Kelder 2006: 80).

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