THEORETICAL APPROACH FOR THE SO-CALLED
MYCENAEAN MIGRATION IN TURKEY*

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The natural and human-made habitat east of the Aegean Sea always captured the attention of the inhabitants of the Greek mainland. As a direct or indirect result, migrations to Asia Minor took place in various periods, movements about which our knowledge is based mainly on written sources. The first migration, which remains the most exotic and highly debated, is assigned to the transition period from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age and was related to the Mycenaean collapse, which was followed by the so-called Dark Age of the Mediterranean region. Advancing theoretical and practical approaches in archaeology have increasingly called into question this concept of a ‘Dark Age’, gradually and slowly illuminating the previously presumed gloom. It seems that the ‘Dark Age’ was not as dark as traditionally thought.

The reasons offered by scholars for the collapse of the Mycenaean palatial hegemony in Greece and in the ‘middle Mediterranean’ vary¹ and remain uncertain today, especially since the theory of a ‘Doric Invasion’² is no longer accepted by many scholars. The most exotic and appealing explanation for the Mycenaean collapse is, no doubt, the one involving the ‘Sea People’. This hypothesis is connected to some preserved Egyptian and Hittite inscriptions in which ‘Sea People’

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are mentioned numerous times in the context of battles with Hittite, Egyptian and Levantine kingdoms. Another theory which has been discussed in relation to the ‘Sea People’ focuses on the introduction of new weaponry, enabling a new type of warfare. According to this theory, this new weaponry was introduced by the ‘Sea People’ to the Late Bronze Age kingdoms. Other theories attribute the ‘system collapse’ to various economic factors, such as increased taxes imposed to cover the high expenses incurred by the palaces or a series of bad harvests which, because of extreme specialization in agricultural production, no longer allowed the palaces to feed the wider population. Recently, Sherratt returned to an economic explanation. In her hypothesis, the palaces depended on the control of specific segments of long-distance trade routes to maintain their position. She explains the collapse of the system as a result of the development of direct routes between areas east and west of the Mediterranean.

Other scholars, however, have observed the situation from different angles and have attempted to end the debate by employing theoretical explanations.


based on changing internal factors, such as the existence of prolonged periods of major internal unrest. These upheavals may have originated from the increasing stresses being placed upon the economic and social systems of palace societies, but the possibility that they emerged from disputes among the ruling elite over territory or resources, or even as a consequence of civil wars, cannot be ruled out. The latter hypothesis would explain the capture and destruction of some of the citadels. Another analysis has developed from geological sciences, claiming that a contraction of the polar ice caps resulted in a chain reaction that negatively affected the availability of essential resources to Late Bronze Age people. The end of the kingdoms has also been attributed to an earthquake.

It is very difficult to determine the chronology of the age of migration after the Mycenaean collapse, since the evidence is very scanty. The relative chronology is based upon the type and decoration of Mycenaean ceramics and it more or less correlates with the dates gained from dendrochronology and radiocarbon dating, thus providing an absolute chronology. Most scholars date the period of destruction to the early twelfth century, the end of LH IIIB2, and therefore the timespan between the beginning of LH IIIC, ca. 1190 BC, and the end of the LH IIIC period, 1070 BC, is the age of migration after the collapse; in other words, the so-called Dark Age of Aegean civilization.

How appropriate is the term ‘Dark Age’ with reference to this period and how does it fit with events in Asia Minor? How might the various current hypotheses for the Mycenaean collapse and the succeeding ‘Dark Age’ relate to the Anatolian context? Did the collapse of Mycenaean palaces and the cause or causes for it really drive migrants from mainland Greece to Asia Minor? Solving the last question is usually — consciously or not — one of the major aims of archaeologists working on the Bronze Age of Asia Minor. Here I will try to respond to the same question by referring to the material cultures of some Late Bronze and Early Iron Age cities in Asia Minor. I will concentrate on the material culture of each city individually, within its own context, in order to develop models which could inform responses to the migration questions. By studying developments in Lycia in the 5th-4th centuries BC, the aim is to determine whether a model for answering questions related to the so-called migration to Asia Minor can be derived.

The data analysed together with information on the acculturation process in 5th-4th-century Lycia, will be questioned in order to derive a common model to be used for explaining all developments, but especially the so-called Mycenaean migration.

**Evidence and Interpretations: The Mycenaean Collapse and Western Asia Minor**

Previously, scholars have identified a Mycenaean presence at various excavated sites in Anatolia on the basis of the presence of Mycenaean ceramics, as well as testimonies in later literary sources. Recent studies, however, have demonstrated that the pottery which was previously thought to be Mycenaean is not always so and that variations on local productions have been incorrectly considered to be imports. There have been some misleading data and observations published, which might have prompted faulty interpretations by scholars. Many burnt layers have been, for example, linked to a single destruction phase on the basis of the location of Mycenaean pottery in one of these burnt layers. It was sometimes, however, not verified whether these layers were contemporary or not, since parallels for Mycenaean artefacts, such as pottery, architectural remains or small finds like seals, related to the various strata were lacking.

Compared to Mycenaean ceramics, the locally produced, undecorated non-Mycenaean or Mycenaean-imitation ceramics are much less well known and therefore often neglected by scholars. However, the quantitative and qualitative appearance of this type of ceramic in contexts with Mycenaean artefacts is very
relevant, because in many cities examples of it are superior in number to the Mycenaean artefacts themselves. Additionally, the results of ongoing excavations in western and southern Turkey have created a need to review our knowledge of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Asia Minor as well as the associated migration phenomenon.

The earliest dated evidence for the city of Ephesus was found under the oldest peripteral temple and around the eastern edge of the Temple of Artemis. The context and artefacts are dated from the late 13th and early 12th centuries BC. Amongst the finds, Mycenaean ceramics are visible. Ephesus also offers archaeological evidence from another area, known as Ayasuluk, a hilltop located to the northeast of the Artemision and on a hilltop. The hill is surrounded by a Seljuk citadel. An early city wall and Late Bronze Age to Middle Bronze Age geometric ceramics were uncovered on the southern slope of the hill. The results emphasize that the hill was continuously inhabited from the Early Bronze Age until the sixth century BC. This was probably the oldest settlement of Ephesos11. These circumstances have been related to the texts of Strabo and Pausanias, who both mention that old Ephesos was inhabited by Carians, Lydians, Lelegs and Luwians12. The city walls have been compared with contemporary Hittite examples from Hattusha and Eflatunpinar. Taken together, the results have led the excavator13 to suggest that the site should be identified with Appassas, old Ephesos, the capital of the Arzawa-Mira kingdom. Archaeological evidence shows that Ephesos had contact with the Mycenaes, but was also in contact with the Hittites.

The excavations at Miletos have unearthed much more archaeological evidence for relations with Mycenae — such as Mycenaean pottery, jewellery and tombs as well as terracotta figurines — than has been found at other cities in western Asia Minor. As a result, the city has been considered one of the centres for Mycenaean settlers14. Early Miletos, considered to be the Millawanda of the

12 Strabo XIV, 641; Pausanias 7.2, 8; Büyükkolanc, op. cit., pp. 47-48.
Hittite texts, was assigned the status of a vassal of the Ahhijawa kingdom, mentioned in the texts, the centre of which is located at Boeotian Thebes. Archaeological evidence — such as Mycenaean pottery, terracotta figurines, weapons, jewellery, tombs and domestic architecture — from some sites to the south of Miletos, including Müskébi and Iasos, seems to suggest the existence of a zone containing Mycenaean settlements extending from Miletos to Halikarnassos in the south and also including nearby islands, from Samos to Rhodes, in the course of the 14th as well as the 13th and 12th centuries BC. Many scholars believe that the archaeological remains prove that not only Mycenaean settlers came to Miletos, but in an earlier period people from the island of Crete also came to settle there. It should be kept in mind, however, that the situation as it emerges at Miletos may partially be related to the fact that this site has the largest excavated area for the corresponding period amongst the excavated cities of western Asia Minor and has provided, therefore, much more material from which to draw conclusions. As a matter of fact, the recent excavations at Ayasuluk in Ephesos also yielded LH IIIA pottery with Minoan motifs. Future excavations may thus lead to a new starting point from which to assess the degree of influence of Crete and to study the possibility of movements from Crete to Ephesos or, rather, the Ionian coast.

Approximately 50 chamber tombs from Müskébi contain mainly inhumation burials and take the form of dromoi, stomia and rock-cut chambers with typical Mycenaean pottery, bronzes and jewellery as grave gifts. The pottery repertoire dates from LH IIIA to LH IIIC and contains imports from Miletos and also probably Rhodes, since ceramics with very specific Rhodian features have been found. Among the remains of later buildings at Iasus in Caria some Mycenaean...
pottery from LH IIIA-B as well as a few terracotta figurines resembling Mycenaean examples were unearthed\textsuperscript{19}.

At Liman Tepe near Clazomenae three different architectural strata have been recorded, providing much evidence for the LH IIIA-C period, although the excavated area is limited in size. Mycenaean ceramics were found in all three layers. However, while for the first period, LH IIIA, the number of Mycenaean ceramics was low, it gradually increased. Nevertheless by the third phase, LH IIIC, locally produced imitations of Mycenaean wares were far more numerous than imported Mycenaean examples. One issue to bear in mind, though, is that the latest architectural phase partially destroyed the second phase underneath it. The buildings in this third layer were often monumental and of rectangular shape\textsuperscript{20}.

As yet, very recent excavations in the site, called Çeşme-Bağlaraarası, have uncovered no architectural or ceramic remains from the LH IIIC period. However, ceramics and a few remains of a wall from the LH III A2- III B showed that the site had a strong connection not only with the Mycenaean world but especially with the Crete\textsuperscript{21}.

Close to Limantepe, located to its north, lies another site called Panaztepe. The rich cemetery at this site has yielded various types of tombs, such as cist graves, built chamber tombs with dromoi, pithos graves, and chamber tombs with

\textsuperscript{19} Niemeier, op. cit., pp. 51-60; Mee, op. cit., pp. 372-373.


stone platforms, as well as grave offerings including seals, bronzes, jewellery and imported and locally produced Mycenaean pottery. The finds derive from widely varying origins, which could be due to the location of the site. It is situated on a hill which formed an island or peninsula in antiquity, a city with a harbour, and was therefore more easily influenced by external commercial ties and political events. Panaztepe is one of the very few sites in Anatolia at which necropoleis have been excavated. It may very well reflect what the necropoleis of Mycenaean Miletos, also a vital harbour city and commercial centre on the coast of the Aegean, looked like. There were also many Mycenaean ceramics and artefacts found during excavations in the ancient city of Panaztepe.

Another site close to Ephesos is Bademgediği Tepe. It is located in the immediate vicinity of Metropolis and is often identified with the Arzawan city of Puranda. It includes a small number of examples of Mycenaean pottery types amongst its assemblage. These belong, however, to LH IIIC and were produced locally. In the layer with the ceramics, three building phases were recorded, the two most important of which reveal the construction of fortifications and their restoration.

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The restoration is believed to have been undertaken by newcomers to the site. The ceramics allow the layer to be dated shortly after ca. 1200 BC.

Recent results from excavations at Çine-Tepecik höyük show that Mycenaean artefacts were used not only in the coastal cities but also at inland centres easily accessible via rivers. In an excavated area of approximately 50x50m, a burnt stratum with some burnt Mycenaean pottery testifies to a significant destruction during the LH IIIC period. Amongst the Mycenaean pottery, examples of locally produced Mycenaean imitations predominate over the imported examples. Both types, however, represent a maximum of only 20 per cent of the total quantity of ceramic finds from the excavated areas of Çine-Tepecik. The undecorated productions, the so-called local ceramics, form the bulk of the ceramic repertoire from the site. These are typically executed in one colour, either buff or reddish-buff, and coated\(^{24}\). Together with these local productions, a stamp seal mentioning the name of a king of the Mira, Tarkaschnawa, found in the same level as the Mycenaean ceramics and their local imitations, suggests that the area belonged, at least during the LH IIIC period, to the Mira kings, who formed a satrapy of the Hittite kingdom in Asia Minor. On a second stamp seal from Tepecik another prince’s name, Tamipiya, was engraved\(^{25}\). In a burnt level just above the floor of the building, remains of arrowheads and spearheads have been found. Carian geometric ceramic examples so far have been found in only one area, of 10x10m, above the LH IIIC level. Corresponding architectural remains from LH IIIC are lacking (this could be due to recent use of the land for agricultural purposes). The architectural remains, such as a defence wall and towers, are from

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the Middle Bronze Age and early stages of LH III period. These examples were, however, found together with a new type of grey ceramic which does not resemble the previously known grey ceramics of the second millennium.

Archaeometrical methods such as Optical Emission Spectral analysis (OES), X-ray fluorescence spectrometer analysis, chemical mineralogical analysis and, most recently, Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) have been applied to answer questions concerning the origin of the Mycenaean ceramics in Asia Minor. Results of these studies have confirmed various qualities of Mycenaean imports, but also local products, in Rhodes, Panaztepe and Troy. At Ialyssos on Rhodes and probably elsewhere on the island, the imported ceramics of LH IIIA2 and LH IIIB were from Argolis, but from LH IIIC onwards most of the ceramics were produced locally. Amongst the analysed Mycenaean pieces from Panaztepe, two-thirds consist of ceramics from Argolis. Miletos seemed hardly to have imported Mycenaean ceramics at all, instead producing them locally; however, in a recent NAA study of ten Mycenaean ceramic fragments from Ephesos and Miletos the results indicate that the two cities imported Mycenaean ceramics from Argolis in LH IIIB, just like Panaztepe and Troy. The still limited amount of analysed material should, however, invoke caution when utilizing the results. When more material has been analysed in the future, it will be possible to interpret the results more firmly.


In summary, it is clear that the archaeological evidence and scientific analyses do not provide proof of a large-scale movement of mainland Greek inhabitants to Asia Minor as a result of the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces in the transitional period from the Late Bronze Age into the Iron Age in LH IIIC. Rather, the analyses show that Mycenaean ceramics were imported into Asia Minor during the earlier periods of the Bronze Age. These imports gradually increased in number while simultaneously imitations were locally produced. In LH IIIC the locally produced Mycenaean imitations occur much more frequently than the imported examples. Production of local Anatolian ceramic wares continued alongside the manufacture of local imitations of Mycenaean ceramics. The existence of Mycenaean ceramics and artefacts before LH IIIC may hint at an already existing network of strong cultural and commercial links between Mycenaean centres in mainland Greece and western Anatolian cities. The strongest ties were undoubtedly between Mycena and Miletos, but political and cultural connections seem to have existed between other cities as well. This is illustrated by Mycenaean imports having been found in the many ‘Prince Kingdoms’ of western Asia Minor, such as Arzawa, Mira, Seha River Land and Lukka. However, the increasing number of Mycenaean imitations in LC IIIC is relevant. This development was probably due to the ceramic and trade markets of Mycenae coming to a standstill as a result of Mycenaean collapse. It is very well possible that at least some craftsmen — among them ceramic painters and producers, artists and businessmen — left their homeland in order to work in the lands of the ‘Prince Kingdoms’. No doubt the power of the rulers of Millawanda (Miletos) must have been tempting for commercial and political reasons, prompting increased migration. This development
must have created a greater challenge for the workshops producing Mycenaean imitation ceramics, as the Mycenaean workshop network had collapsed, but at same time it would have increased the volume of ceramics produced.

The quantities of local undecorated Anatolian ceramic wares are much higher than those of the imitation Mycenaean wares and Mycenaean imports in many cities. Furthermore, architectural remains, such as fortifications, as well as tomb types and grave goods, show mixed cultural effects deriving from both Mycenaean and Hittite origins.

As a result, it looks as if only a limited, rather than a massive, proportion of the population left their homeland just after the Mycenaean palaces collapsed. The developments in western Asia Minor are the result of an acculturation process rather than of a massive Mycenaean migration. In this acculturation process Western Anatolia remained a multicultural contact zone for two major powers, the Hittites and the Mycenaeans, and the inhabitants variously suffered or benefitted depending on the politics of the time. Therefore, over time the changing picture of Mycenaean ceramics in Asia Minor should be associated with the attitudes and reactions of the inhabitants of Western Anatolia within the framework of an acculturation process which developed after the distribution network for the Mycenaean ceramic industry had collapsed.

An answer should therefore be sought for the question of the origin of the burnt layers: are they the result of destructive Mycenaean migration, or of Hittite attacks against the disloyal western cities and vassal kingdoms, supporters of Mycenaean?

**Alternative Theoretical Approach: Acculturation of Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C. Lycia as an Explanation?**

The answer to this question might be found by using a theoretical approach: attempting to create an explanatory model by observing a comparable development which occurred in another cultural period and material culture. The work of various scholars has concentrated on Lycia and the Lycians, as well as their relations with the Greeks, and Greek influence on Lycian culture. This influence can be traced in various elements of material culture; for example, sculpture, architecture and literary works. In addition to results from excavation projects in Lycia, such as those at Xanthos, Limyra and Patara, results of the extensive and intensive surveys undertaken by the Kyeneai Project and supported by some test
trenches have opened new perspectives on Lycia to scholars. The Kyaneai Project has identified a site, known today as Avşar Tepesi, located close to Kyaneai. This is, so far, the only known site for which the settlement plan, building forms and other elements of material culture, as reflected in the remains, do not match Greek norms but are of an entirely local type. The site was abandoned after the Classical period and has been identified with the Lycian city of Zagaba, known from historical records. The remains at this site seem to illustrate that widespread Greek influence in Lycia started only after the 5th century BC.

At many Lycian cities, the archaeological remains and the appearance of the sites today reflect the nature of the cities in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Although archaeological remains on the acropolis of Xanthos date back to the seventh century BC, they do not reflect monumental building activities. Archaeological evidence indicates that buildings remained rather modest until the Persian period. Herodotus recounts (I. 176), however, that after the invasion of the Persians and their crushing victory over the Xanthians the city was reinvigorated by some families who had successfully defended the acropolis against the Persian army. Research has shown that in the sixth century BC many cities in Lycia, such as Xanthos, Limyra, Patara and Avşar Tepesi, already had an acropolis with fortifications surrounding some public and other structures, including storage buildings, tower-shaped constructions, residences, pillar-shaped tombs, honorific monuments and theatre-like buildings, which may well have formed the centres of the settlements and the living areas of the aristocracy or local dynasts. The cities continued to be ruled by local dynasts, who seem to have maintained their hold over the area as satraps under the Persian hegemony until the so-called satrapy revolt.

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In the first quarter of the fourth century BC, a ruler who styled himself King of Lycia, Perikles, made Limyra the capital of his kingdom and aimed to rule the Lycian lands from Phaselis in the east to Telmessos in the west. Although he did not succeed in his plan, his dream must have triggered the satrapy revolt of around 360 BC and the Persian political move of inserting Lycia into the Carian administrative zone under the hegemony of the Hecatomnid Mausolos, satrap of the Persians. Mausolos was probably the ruler who introduced the Greek polis system towards the middle of the fourth century.


The transition to Greek culture, however, did not begin suddenly with Mausolos; Greek material culture, as well as Greek thinking, was already known to the Lycians and had probably already begun to affect their way of thinking and living. In the fifth century, Greek political spies as well as members of a small Greek community consisting of businessmen, artists, educators/philosophers, religious personnel and others may have functioned as agitators against the system of Lycian dynastic rulers and especially Persian satrapies in the area. They were opposed to, for example, heavy taxation and they promoted the Greek way of organization, illustrating the economic and cultural benefits it brought with it. Promotion of the ‘Greek way of life’, better to say ‘Greek standardization’, was a tool they used to demonstrate power and independence to other cities and to opponents. It possibly even reached the palatial environment. Local rulers such as Perikles of Limyra and Mausolos of Halikarnassos voluntarily accepted Greek norms and standards and blended them with local Lycian traditions and characteristics in order to control and balance their positions in the area.\(^\text{35}\) The case of dynastic Lycia and the changes initiated by Mausolos might lead us to seek answers to questions concerning earlier phases, such as the period of the Mycenaean collapse or of Ionian migration in general, adjusting the model by replacing local rulers of the Mycenaean world with Lycian dynasts.

Just as the ‘Prince Kingdoms’, such as Arzawa, Mira and Seha River Land, and the cities under their hegemonies, did in the earlier period against the great Hittite Kingdom, Lycian local dynasts apparently accepted and aimed to use ‘Greek standardization’ as a kind of tool against the great Persian Empire under extreme circumstances, adapting their policies and political activities to suit the circumstances of the times and assert their power and independence.

In various cities of western Asia Minor, the large quantity of locally produced, undecorated ceramics by contrast with the rather small number of Mycenaean and Mycenaean-imitation ceramics (except in Miletos), as well as building remains such as fortifications, tomb types and grave goods showing mixed cultural influence deriving from both Mycenaean and Hittite origins can be explained as manifestations of an acculturation process resulting from interaction with the two great powers, Hittite and Mycenaean. The similarities between foreign features within the local material cultures discussed here may therefore not necessarily reflect the immigration of a foreign population but rather the way that acculturation occurred in the cities of Western Asia Minor under the rule of ‘Prince Kingdoms’ in the contact zone of two great powers.

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