

GREECE DURING THE LATE BRONZE AGE*

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Abstract

In this article the political composition of Greece during the Late Bronze Age will be evaluated. Hittite texts indicate that during the 13th century a Great King of a land Ahhiyawa resided somewhere in the Aegean. By implication, this land should have been of substantial territorial size. Other contemporary sources, however, do not refer to this entity. The Linear B texts, for example, suggest that the palatial centres of Mycenaean Greece exercised only regional rule. At first glance archaeology does neither contradict nor support either view. The discrepancies between the various sources will be examined in order to locate Ahhiyawa, to establish its territorial extent, its political composition, and its place in the Late Bronze Age world of Great Kings.

1. Introduction

A country called Ahhiyawa is mentioned in Hittite texts dating from about 1400 to 1220 BC. According to recent discoveries in the field of Anatolian topography, it must be situated off the Anatolian mainland.¹ As shown on Fig. 1, it laid west of the Arzawa lands on the Anatolian west coast, and west of the Aššuwa lands, situated in north-western Anatolia. Ahhiyawan core territory has been variously placed on Rhodes, the Argolid and the Thebaid, but consensus has not been reached.

Recently, several attempts have been made to locate Ahhiyawa and establish its territorial extent. Mountjoy suggested on the grounds of a pottery *koinè* that Ahhiyawan territory extended over the Dodecanese including Rhodes, and Miletus on the Anatolian coast.² Apart from the fact that a cultural phenomenon such as a *koinè* does not necessarily relate to political structures, the so-called East Aegean–West Anatolian Interface *koinè* came into being only during LH III B (a period of decline on Rhodes) and flourished during the post-palatial

* It is my pleasure to thank Dr. F. A. M. Wiggermann, Dr. J. P. Crielaard, Prof. Dr. R. J. van der Spek, Dr. P. Goedegebuure, Dr. J. Hazenbos, Prof. Dr. J. de Roos, Dr. F. Waanders, Dr. G.-J. van Wijngaarden, Dr. F. Woudhuizen, D. Burgersdijk, ms. W. Waal and M. de Weerd for their comments, suggestions and proofreading. Thanks are due to the staff of the Netherlands Institute at Athens and to H. Hall, assistant director of the Irish Institute at Athens, for their support and friendship during my stay in Greece. Above all, I am indebted to my parents for their support during my studies.

¹ Hawkins 1998, 2. As a result of a new reading of the Karabel Pass Relief, proposed by Hawkins, it has become clear that this area represented the border between the kingdom of Mira and the Kingdom of Seha. As a consequence, references in Hittite texts referring to the position of previously unidentified lands to Arzawa/Mira can now be set against the fixed point, that is Mira. The picture thus evolving in western Anatolia does not leave room for Ahhiyawa on the Anatolian mainland. With references such as "across the sea" and with the apparent proximity of Ahhiyawan territory to Arzawa and Aššuwa, there can be no doubt that Ahhiyawa should be situated west of the Anatolian coast, i.e. on the isles and/or in the Greek mainland.

² Mountjoy 1998.

period LH IIIC. It is difficult to relate this to a powerful expansionistic Ahhiyawa of around 1250 BC. Hope Simpson argued for a Mycenae centred Ahhiyawa, including several isles and Miletus.³ His reconstruction of a fairly small territorial state seems however incompatible with that what we know about Ahhiyawa from Hittite sources. From these we can reconstruct the following history of contacts between Ahhiyawa and the Hittites.

Although initially Ahhiyawa was only of interest to the Hittites because of some raids on the west coast of Anatolia and Cyprus, its importance gradually increased. During the reign of the Hittite King Muršili II, Ahhiyawa was allied to Arzawa. When Arzawa was defeated circa 1315 BC, the Hittites sacked and burned the city of Millawanda.⁴ Though the centre was culturally speaking Greek, it is not clear whether Millawanda at this time was a part of Ahhiyawa.

During the reign of Hattušili III, Millawanda evidently had fallen to the king of Ahhiyawa. This is evident from the so-called Tawagalawa letter written by the Hittite king to his Greek "brother" and full of complaints about Greek activity on the Anatolian west coast. As diplomatic vocabulary during the Bronze Age was based on family metaphors for all the corresponding parties,⁵ the brotherhood between the king of Ahhiyawa and Hattušili does not relate to blood ties. In the same letter, the Hittite king addresses the king of Ahhiyawa as a Great King, therewith accepting him as an equal and one of the Great Powers of the time. I will come to this below. Although Ahhiyawa around this time apparently was regarded as one of the major states of the then known world (at least from a Hittite point of view) its fortunes were changing. A letter from a Hittite king to a vassal in western Anatolia, dated around 1235 BC, seems to indicate that Millawanda now was under Hittite control. In a Hittite text dated around 1220 BC, Ahhiyawa is erased from a list of states with a Great King. This is the last reference to Ahhiyawa in Hittite texts. Some twenty years later, the end of the so-called Mycenaean Era is marked by conflagrations at the major palatial centres in the Greek world. Ahhiyawans are thought to have participated in the Great Migrations and one of the Sea People listed in Egyptian texts, the "Ekwesh", may represent people from the land that to the Hittites was known as Ahhiyawa.⁶ By this time however, it is clear that we are dealing with people, rather than a state.

Whatever the exact connotation of the title Great King (see below), it is clear that it denoted the ruler of a state that was considered a major power of the time — something equivalent to the modern term superpower. According to the texts, the Hittites around 1250 apparently perceived an Aegean entity as such a superpower. One would expect references from other areas to such a formidable entity, in the first place from the Aegean itself, but these are lacking. Of course, we have the Homeric stories about the sack of Troy and the return of Odysseus as well as several other Greek legends. These present a past, apparently during the so-called Mycenaean Age, that was characterized by the formation of a Greek Alliance against Troy. Greek leaders from this alliance are reported to have upheld contact with foreign nobility, especially in Anatolia. The problem is that these epics were written

³ Hope Simpson 2003.

⁴ Niemeier 2002, 296. For the equation with later Miletus, see Hawkins 1998, 30.

⁵ Avruch 2000, 154-157.

⁶ Helck 1995, 111-112.

down much later, during the eighth century BC or possibly somewhat earlier. Before that, the stories were shaped by centuries of oral tradition and as a consequence, they are unreliable sources. Therefore, I will largely ignore them in this paper.

Contemporary sources from the Greek world itself, i.e. Linear B texts, do not refer to any greater entity in the area but rather suggest that the palatial centres of the Mycenaean world exercised regional rule at best. Supra-regional contacts are scarcely attested and if so, they do not seem to relate to political unity. However, the Linear B texts on the tablets only concern administrative issues, such as lists of personnel, livestock, agricultural produce, offerings and the storage of textiles. Also, lists of tributary centres are known. No texts comparable to Hittite historiography or treaties are known in Linear B and this raises the question whether one could expect to find clear references to a larger state (as Ahhiyawa should be) in Linear B texts in the first place. Although an argument *ex silentio*, the Greek script itself points to use other than on clay⁷ and, as a consequence, one should bare in mind at least the possibility that the tablets with Linear B texts may not deliver the whole story.

In this respect one should note that the king of Ahhiyawa is reported to have written specific orders to his attaché in Millawanda. Apparently, at least some of the internal affairs were dealt with in writing rather than orally. It should be noted that messages such as the one reported in the Tawagalawa letter (see below), have not been found in the archaeological record, which in my opinion weakens the point that as there is no proof of overall rule in Linear B texts, the concept of a large Mycenaean state cannot be historical. Texts like the one above may have been written on perishable materials or even on wax tablets, an example of which was found in the Ulu Burun shipwreck.⁸

The fragmentary text KUB XXVI 91 (CTH 183), in which a letter from the Ahhiyawan king is quoted, indicates that he did not only write to his attaché, but also to the Hittites.⁹ I will return to this later. The Linear B texts provide a fragmentary view at best; moreover, most of these texts date to the final years of the palaces, i.e. shortly before 1200 BC, while Ahhiyawa disappeared from the Hittite records around 1220. As far as the archaeological evidence in Greece is concerned, there are no apparent indications for more than sporadic interstate contact, although the cultural (Mycenaean) *koinè* in the Aegean cannot, in my opinion, wholly be explained by peer policy interaction.

Written testimonies concerning the Aegean from Egypt are scarce. The famous wall painting in the tombs of the Theban nobility seem to depict Aegeans, but not necessarily Mycenaean, bringing their goods to the Nilotic kingdom, but there is no reference to anything that might be interpreted as pointing to the existence of a large Greek state. A text in the mortuary temple of Pharaoh Amenhotep III at Kom el Hetan seems to suggest at least some cohesion between several centres in the southern Peloponnese including Mycenae, but the nature of this text is poorly understood. From the archaeological record in Egypt it is clear that at least during the Amarna era, Egypt showed a distinct interest in mainland Greece, as a large amount of Mycenaean pottery has been found at El Amarna, then the capital of Egypt.

⁷ Chadwick 1976, 27.

⁸ Symington 1941, 112; on the wreck; Bass 1967; Cline 1995b, 274 proposes Mycenaean presence on the ship.

⁹ Gurney 2002, 135.

But here again, the question remains whether these vessels, all from an Argolid provenance, came to Egypt as a result of trade or diplomatic exchange. I will return to this below.

Thus, there are discrepancies between the archaeological record, the Hittite texts, the Linear B texts and the Egyptian material. The aim of this paper is to check whether these discrepancies can be bridged. In order to do this, I will look more closely at the sources listed above. Before that, the connotation of the title Great King, as used in the Hittite texts, needs to be evaluated.

2. Great Kings in the Late Bronze Age

As has been noted above, there are only two Hittite texts in which Ahhiyawa is reported to be the land of a Great King. Texts from other areas dealing with the political standing of parts of Greece, or more specifically Ahhiyawa, are scarce. As a consequence, it is difficult to establish what Hattušili meant while addressing his Greek brother as a Great King from the Ahhiyawa texts alone. However, some light on the perceptions on the title is shed in the political correspondence of other Great Kings of that time. Major sources of information in this respect are the so-called Amarna archive and the royal Hittite archives at Hattuša. The Amarna letters give the impression that the Egyptian pharaoh held some status as *primus inter pares* among the corresponding Great Kings of the time, but this sense of superiority is probably more a result of political rhetoric.¹⁰

It has been suggested that for the Hittites the meaning of Great King in the beginning indeed did not mean anything more than a king ruling some neighbouring kingdoms.¹¹ Superiority of the Great King over other, smaller kings no doubt was an important aspect of the title to all participants of the interstate diplomacy. Its purpose was however primarily to serve as a means to deal with other independent powers. In this respect, the world was perceived as a composite of Great Kingdoms only; loose, independent entities did not fit into the ideological framework. As a consequence, in theory every ruler that was able to act according to his own wishes could be regarded as a Great King. In short: independence was the major prerequisite for Great Kingship.

Independence usually did not come about easily and the title of Great King was something that could be checked. As a consequence, kings had to field a significant number of troops to enforce their independence. This is illustrated in a letter from a Hittite king, probably Urhi-Tešup (1272-1267 BC), sent to the Assyrian King Adad-nirari I (1295-1264 BC) in which an Assyrian victory over Hittite forces is explicitly used as a justification for the attribution of the title to the Assyrian king.¹² The army of a Great King usually consisted of several contingents of troops provided by his vassals. This is illustrated in an Egyptian account of the famous battle at Kadesh, where the Hittite army is reported to have consisted of several people, both Hittites and their subdued vassals.¹³ Apart from their obligation to aid their overlord in person and with troops, vassals were not to deal with foreign lands on their own account.

¹⁰ Kühne 1973, 58; Avruç 2000, 160-164.

¹¹ Otten 1951, 35-43; Bryce 1998, 37.

¹² Beckman 1995, 146-147.

¹³ Kitchen 1982, 53.

All outward communication was directed by the Great King,¹⁴ although this did not necessarily include trade.

Concluding, a Great Kingdom was viewed by its contemporaries as:

1. An independent state.
2. A relatively large territorial state.
3. A composite state, comprising several subdued entities.
4. A state headed by one King.
5. A state which was of military importance and potentially dangerous.

Considering the gravity of the title of Great King as demonstrated above, it is unlikely that its use in the Ahhiyawan case should be seen as an example of Hittite *ad hoc* policy; an effort to achieve a goal without the need of military intervention. The consolatory tone of the letter, as well as a psychological sketch of the Hittite king¹⁵ adds to the impression that we are not dealing with an act of convenience here, but with the reality of Ahhiyawan power.¹⁶ Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that, at least in Hittite eyes, Ahhiyawa around 1250 BC appeared rather much as the above. This does not necessarily mean that Ahhiyawa was in every respect mirroring the structures of the Near Eastern powers, but it evidently did meet the basic demands at least superficially. As Ahhiyawa must be placed somewhere within the Greek world, the question rises whether or not there is evidence from the Greek side for a kingdom that would fit the demands as sketched above.

3. The Mycenaean world according to the Linear B texts

Linear B documents have been found at several palatial centres, including Mycenae, Thebes, Knossos, and Pylos. Especially the texts from Pylos have over the years been studied extensively. As has been noted above, the Linear B texts offer only a limited insight into the Mycenaean world, as they only concern administrative matters. Still, some points regarding the political structures of Late Bronze Age Greece can be deduced from these texts.

The Linear B texts indicate that the palatial centres on mainland Greece exercised regional rule at best and that evidence for supra regional contact is scarce. Below, attention will be directed to the geographical layout of the kingdom, its political composition and its dealing with regions outside its territory as it appears from the Linear B texts. I will primarily take the tablets from the palace of Pylos as a case study, as these have been studied extensively over the years and were found in relatively well documented context. It should be noted that many of the structures attested for the Pylian state apply for the other Mycenaean states too.

Each Mycenaean kingdom was in principle governed from the palace. It seems that the palaces exercised control over most, if not all of the industries within their realm.¹⁷ This included not only those situated in or near the palace, but also those at provincial centres. In

¹⁴ Bryce 2003b, 42-43.

¹⁵ Klengel 2002, 73; Meier 2000, 166-167.

¹⁶ Güterbock 1983, 136.

¹⁷ Killen 1999, 88-89.

the case of the kingdom of Pylos, which encompassed at least the larger part of present-day Messenia (see Fig. 2), the palace was situated on the Englianos ridge. Palatial territory was divided into several provinces, each headed by its own administrative centre. Pylian territory was divided into two provinces; generally called the hither and the further provinces, of which the latter was administrated by the secondary capital Leuktron (*re-u-ko-to-ro*).¹⁸ The Aigaleon ridge in all likelihood served as a natural boundary between the two,¹⁹ although some have argued for an east-west division of the Pylian realm.²⁰ The provinces were themselves divided into several smaller districts known as *damoi*. Some of these may have been headed by a *guasileus*, the ancestral form of the Classical *basileus*. To the Mycenaeans this title seems to have had a less exalted meaning than to the Classical Greeks, as it is also used to designate the chief of, for example, a group of smiths.²¹ This rather ordinary connotation may be compared to the use of the title by Homer, as we read in the *Odyssey* of many *basilees* in Ithaka (*Od.* I.394-5).

The head of state is however as clearly attested in Linear B as in Homer; this was the *wanax* (Homeric: *anax*). Although the title occurs several times in the texts, no personal name of a Mycenaean ruler is known with certainty although a certain *E-ke-ra₂-wo* at Pylos seems so exalted that it is hard to believe that he is not the *wanax*. The absence of further qualifications of the title indicates that the state knew only one king,²² with responsibility for the political and economical organisation of the state's territory.²³

Although it is clear that the *wanax* was by far the most important figure in Mycenaean society, there were others of importance. One of these was the *lawagetas*, an official who may have been something like a marshal, a leader of the host.²⁴ Although this person can be considered of great importance, he clearly stood below the *wanax* in the social hierarchy. This is evident from Pylian Linear B texts, where he is reported to have had in his possession one third of the amount of land as the *wanax* had.²⁵ Other officials like the *eqeta* ("followers") also had their share of land, wealth, and influence, but usually to a lesser extent than the *lawagetas*. This for example seems to have been the case in **e-ro*, Έλος, (the marsh), a Pylian district close to modern Kyparissia, which was divided into a land of Esareus and a land of Atreus.²⁶ In this respect, as has been proposed by Kilian,²⁷ it seems that although the *wanax* was the most important figure of a Mycenaean state, his power did not go totally unchallenged. As a consequence, the *wanax* would constantly try to strengthen his grip on society in order to get both the nobility and the surrounding *damoi* more securely under his whip.²⁸ Still, when applying the model of Kilian "of the Mycenaean social hierarchy

¹⁸ Chadwick 1973, 139; Bennett 1999b, 10.

¹⁹ Eder 2003, 298; Shelmerdine 1981, 319-325.

²⁰ Bintliff 1977, 39-40, 51-54; Bennet 1998-1999, 19.

²¹ Chadwick 1976, 70.

²² Panagl 1986, 280-282.

²³ Wundsam 1968; Killen, 1985.

²⁴ Palmer 1954, 35-36.

²⁵ Chadwick 1976, 116.

²⁶ Bennet 1998-1999, 24.

²⁷ Kilian 1988, 292.

²⁸ Deger Jalkotzy 1978.

according to the Linear B tablets",²⁹ one cannot but conclude that the *wanax* was a major share-holder of palatial property.

Although the organisation of the Mycenaean palatial states can be reasonably reconstructed, the fact remains that we are dealing with fairly small entities. In the case of Pylos for instance, there is no evidence that the kingdom ever encompassed more than Messenia. However, Pylian troops did venture further from home, as the tablets report that small numbers of men were dispatched to centres in Elis and Oikhalia, on the Pylian-Arcadian border. Though some of these troops are seen as special forces,³⁰ rowers seem to have been sent to other regions as well. Tablet An 12 [1] reports that 27 rowers were dispatched to *pe-re-u-ro-na-de*, which may be equated with Pleuron. As this centre is situated on the northern shore of the Corinthian Gulf, but is nowhere attested as part of the Pylian realm, this shows that the palace of Pylos was engaged in regions well beyond the borders. Slaves from several centres and regions in the Aegean, including Miletus and Lesbos are attested at Pylos, too.³¹ That the Pylians had the naval capacity to travel to these areas is clear from Linear B texts.³²

Tablets from other centres indicate some supra-regional contacts as well: goods go from Mycenae to Thebes and at Knossos people from Nauplion are present, as well as an Egyptian.³³ The problem with the evidence as quoted above is that although supra regional contacts are attested, the nature of these contacts remains difficult to establish. At Pylos, for example, women from Miletus are recorded as slaves, yet Miletus was a Greek centre — at least culturally speaking.³⁴ This then may indicate bellicose actions between Mycenaean centres, but another more plausible option is that these slaves were acquired at Miletus, but were themselves not necessarily of Mycenaean origin.³⁵

The picture thus evolving is that of several regional entities, each dominated by a palatial centre. The question remains whether this picture would allow for the existence of a greater entity in Greece. I already noted above that clear evidence for this concept is conspicuously absent in the Linear B texts. The name Ahhiyawa itself appears only once in Linear B as *a-ka-wi-ja-de* in a tablet from Knossos,³⁶ where it may concern a town just as well as a state. On the other hand, the Linear B texts do not exclude the existence of a supra regional state. Indeed, some features of the Mycenaean administration suggest that there may have been more in Late Bronze Age Greece than a patchwork of regional centres. The recurrence of the names of officials at several major centres is an indication of supra regional engagement.³⁷ Indeed it may point to more, as pointed out by Killen: "several names [...] appear in more than one archive, suggesting at least the possibility that all these persons were members of a single ruling dynasty".³⁸ The texts indicate that these people served as collectors, which might point towards the centralized gathering of resources, although it is equally possible that

²⁹ Kilian 1988a, 293.

³⁰ Geschnitzer 1999, 259-260.

³¹ Parker 1999, 499; Chadwick 1976, 80.

³² See Palaima 2001.

³³ Palaima 1991, 280-282.

³⁴ Niemeier 1998, 34; Mee 1978, 133.

³⁵ Chadwick 1976, 80.

³⁶ Chadwick 1973, 138.

³⁷ Killen 1979, 179; Chadwick 1973, 102-103.

³⁸ Killen 1999, 88.

these collectors served in the process of gift exchange between the different Mycenaean centres.³⁹ It is not clear, however, whether we are dealing with the same people in different centres or with different people bearing the same names. But even in case of the latter, one could argue that the recurrence of names in elite families all over Greece points towards at least dynastic ties. In addition, the fact that the way of administrating the palatial territories — including several flaws — is more or less similar at all palatial centres is difficult to explain as a result of a cultural *koinè* only. The dispatching of troops, if in small numbers, to regions outside Pylian territory may indicate some cooperation with these areas, as in case of a military campaign against these regions one would expect larger numbers. In conclusion, the Linear B texts do neither contradict nor support the concept of a large political entity in Late Bronze Age Greece.

4. Ahhiyawa in Hittite texts

While the Linear B texts have been demonstrated to be inconclusive with respect to the political composition of Late Bronze Age Greece, it is of importance to consider more precisely how the Hittites perceived Ahhiyawa. The major aim in this respect must be to isolate Ahhiyawan political structures from the Hittite texts, i.e. to establish the nature of Ahhiyawan hold on Millawanda and its activities in western Anatolia. The question which we should bear in mind while pursuing this aim is "how did the king of Ahhiyawa gain a lasting influence in western Anatolia and, more particularly, how did he field enough men to achieve this".

Table 1: Chronology (dates are approximate)

MYCENAEAN		HITTITE (NEW KINGDOM)	
1400 BC			
1375 BC	LH IIIA1	1400-1360	Tudhaliya I/II, Arnuwanda I, Hattušili II?
	LH IIIA2	1360-1344	Tudhaliya III
		1344-1322	Šuppiluliuma I
	LH IIIB1	1322-1321	Arnuwanda II
1300 BC		1321-1295	Muršili II
		1295-1272	Muwatalli II
		1272-1267	Urhi-Tešub
		1267-1237	Hattušili III
		1237-1228	Tudhaliya IVa
1230 BC	LH IIIB2	1228-1227	Kurunta
		1227-1209	Tudhaliya IVb
1200 BC	Transitional	1209-1207	Arnuwanda III
	LH IIIB2-IIIC early	1207-	Šuppiluliuma II

Tudhaliya IV: a. first period as king; b. second period as king.

Aegean chronology based on Warren/Hankey 1989; Hittite chronology based on Bryce 1998.

³⁹ Parkinson 1999, 84.

As noted above, contacts between Hittites and Ahhiyawans are attested from circa 1400 BC to circa 1220 BC. Contact seems to have been most intense during the 13th century. Sommer listed a total of 16 texts referring to Ahhiyawa in his 1932 *Ahhijava Urkunden*. Today the number of texts referring to Ahhiyawa has grown to about 25, with an additional number of fragments that may bear the name Ahhiyawa.⁴⁰ Below, the most relevant texts are dealt with in chronological order. Most of them have been published either in the *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi* (KBo) series or in the *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi* (KUB) series. All of these texts have been catalogued in the *Catalogue des Textes Hittites* (CTH), now also available on the internet.

The first text dealing with Ahhiyawa is dated circa 1400 BC, and is composed by the Hittite King Arnuwanda I (ca. 1400 BC). KUB XIV 1,⁴¹ also known as the Mischief of Madduwatta or the Indictment of Madduwatta, deals with the deeds of Madduwatta, possibly an Arzawan prince, and a certain Attariššija.⁴² The latter is labelled "the man from Ahhija" (Madd. §1.1).

Attariššija, the man from Ahhija, chased [you] Madduwatta, out of your land. Then he harassed you and kept chasing you. And he continued to seek an [evil] death for you, Madduwatta. He [would] have killed you, but you, Madduwatta, fled to the father [of My Majesty], and the father of My Majesty saved you from death. He [got] rid of Attariššija for you. Otherwise, Attariššija would not have left you alone, but would [have killed] you.

KUB XIV 1, §1, 1-5. Adapted from Beckman 1995.

Apparently, Attariššija has come into armed conflict with Madduwatta, causing the latter to flee for safety to the Hittite court. The father of Arnuwanda, the Hittite King Tudhaliya I, installed Madduwatta as a vassal in the country of Zippasla, with as a later addition the territory known as the Siyanti Land, roughly speaking the core of the kingdom of Arzawa.⁴³ Although Madduwatta now was a vassal of the Hittite king, the man from Ahhija attacked a second time. Madduwatta was forced to flee again, to be saved by a Hittite expeditionary force.⁴⁴

But [later] Attariššija, the man from Ahhija, came and was plotting to kill you, Madduwatta. But when the father of My Majesty heard, he dispatched Kisnapli, infantry, and chariotry in battle against Attariššija. And you, Madduwatta, once more did not resist Attariššija, but broke ranks before him. Then Kisnapli came and took charge of you [...] from Hatti. Kisnapli went in battle against Attariššija. 100 [Chariots and ... infantry] of Attariššija [drew up]. And they fought. One officer of Attariššija was killed, and one officer of ours, Zidanza, was killed. Then Attariššija [...] to Madduwatta, and he went off to his own land. And they installed Madduwatta in his place once more.

KUB XIV 1, §12, 60-65. Adapted from Beckman 1995.

⁴⁰ Heinhold-Krahmer 2003, 204.

⁴¹ Götze 1968.

⁴² Bryce 1998, 141; Götze 1968, 40.

⁴³ Hawkins 1998, 40.

⁴⁴ Bryce 1998, 141.

According to the text, Madduwatta was later found raiding the coast of Cyprus. This act aroused the anger of his Hittite overlord, as Cyprus was considered subject to the Hittite crown.⁴⁵ In this context Attariššija is mentioned again, also raiding the Cypriote coast together with a "man from Piggaja". The Madduwatta text represents the first textual evidence for Greek incursions on the Anatolian mainland. Excavations at Miletus suggest that Mycenaeans settled there already during LH IIB,⁴⁶ although Mycenaean prevalence at Millawanda only came about later, possibly as a result of new waves of migrations.⁴⁷ It is likely that Attariššija had a base on Anatolian soil, although Hawkins noted that Ahhija (a version of Ahhiyawa) itself at this time must be situated "across the sea" and that Arzawa represented its point of contact with Anatolia.⁴⁸ Ahhiyawa proper without a doubt must be sought off the Anatolian mainland, but this does not exclude the possibility that already at an early stage Mycenaeans used Millawanda as a basis for further action.⁴⁹ They evidently did so during later years.

Ahhiyawan relations with the Hittites remained hostile during the course of the 14th century. Around 1320 BC, the Hittite King Muršili II (1321-1295 BC) was engaged in western Anatolia, in an effort to subdue the kingdom of Arzawa, which had been a growing power in the west during the Amarna era.⁵⁰ Greek encroachment in western Anatolia around this time is attested in KUB XXVI 91;⁵¹ probably from the reign of Muršili II or his successor Muwatalli.⁵² The text deals with the Mycenaean takeover of several isles, presumably in the eastern Aegean. In the fragmentary KUB XIV 15 I, 23-26, there is a reference to the mobilisation of troops, the land Ahhiyawa and its king, as well as the king of Arzawa, Uhhaziti.⁵³ In this text, the land of Millawanda is said to belong to the king of Ahhiyawa and again seems to be the centre of turmoil in western Anatolia. With respect to the mobilization of troops as mentioned in the text, Sommer⁵⁴ proposed it was the Ahhiyawan king himself who summoned his troops to quell a rebellion, but another reading, now favoured by many scholars suggests it was not the Ahhiyawan king, but the Hittite King Muršili.⁵⁵ At any rate, the king of Ahhiyawa in this text seems to be an independent ruler, with control over Millawanda.

As has been noted above, Millawanda is reported to have come under control of the king of Ahhiyawa in KUB XIV 15. This can be dated to around 1315 BC, the transitional years of LH IIIA2 to LH IIIB — the floruit of the Greek palatial centres. Archaeological data seem to confirm the texts concerning Millawanda/Miletus. Following an apparently Minoan settlement, a settlement with Mycenaean traits was uncovered near the later Athena temple.⁵⁶ In its destruction layer, by some⁵⁷ attributed to Hittite military activity as referred to in KUB XIV

⁴⁵ Madd. §36.85; Güterbock 1983, 134-135.

⁴⁶ I.e. around 1450 BC; Niemeier 1998, 142.

⁴⁷ Niemeier 2002, 295.

⁴⁸ Hawkins 1998, 40.

⁴⁹ Mountjoy 1998, 51.

⁵⁰ Moran 1987, 101-103; EA31, EA32.

⁵¹ Sommer 1932, 268-271.

⁵² Easton 1985, 192; Gurney 2002, 136.

⁵³ Götze 1933, non vidi, but quoted in Bryce 1989b, 299.

⁵⁴ Sommer 1932, 307.

⁵⁵ Bryce 1989b, 299; Güterbock 1983, 135.

⁵⁶ Niemeier 1998, 36-37.

⁵⁷ Bryce 1989b, 299; Güterbock 1983, 135.

15, pottery from exactly this period was found in substantial quantities, as well as Minoan kilns and houses with clear Mycenaean parallels. After its destruction, a new, evidently Mycenaean settlement arose, attested by Mycenaean pottery, chamber tombs and possibly even some sherds bearing Linear B signs.

This third settlement at Miletus could be the centre that is referred to in the so-called Tawagalawa letter. This letter, published as KUB XIV 3, was probably sent by Hattušili III to the unnamed king of Ahhiyawa and relates to several problems that the Hittite king encountered on the western fringe of his empire.⁵⁸ Most of the troubles seem to have been concentrated around the city of Millawanda and were caused by activities of a certain Tawagalawa and a man called Piyamaradu. In the Hittite letter Tawagalawa is regarded as the brother of the addressee, who is in turn addressed as an equal, as a Great King. Piyamaradu seems to have been of Anatolian origin⁵⁹ and must have been a man of some stature.⁶⁰ It is clear in the letter that, despite the Hittite destruction, Millawanda is (again) securely in Ahhiyawan hands.

Although much of the historical implications of the Tawagalawa letter are still a matter of debate,⁶¹ parts of the Tawagalawa letter offer some insight in Ahhiyawan political structures. It is of interest to note that apparently, the local ruler of Millawanda named Atpā is incapable of dealing with the wishes of the Hittite Great King directly, in a way he deems best. Instead, he inquires after the wishes of his overlord, the king of Ahhiyawa, which leaves Piyamaradu some time to escape from Millawanda by ship. These dealings fit rather well the picture of any Great Kingdom, where — as stated above — vassal rulers were not allowed to deal freely with foreign potentates and foreign policy was something exclusively for the central administration. At least in this respect then, it is understandable how the King of Hatti came to see his Greek counterpart as an equal.

Another aspect of Greek rule over Miletus, as put forward in the Tawagalawa letter, may have been equally familiar to the Hittites. Tawagalawa, after whom the letter is called, appears to be the "brother" of the Ahhiyawan king. The term "brother" may imply a political relationship, one of parity to the Greek King rather than blood ties.⁶² Considering the fact that Tawagalawa is operating within the territory of the Ahhiyawan king, it seems to me that we in this case are dealing with the brother "by blood". He apparently is active on the Anatolian coast but the reasons for his presence are only vaguely understood. Tawagalawa clearly was familiar with Anatolia and its people as he is reported to have stood in a chariot with the charioteer of the Hittite king himself (Taw. §8, 59-62). It has been suggested that he was recruiting Anatolians, i.e. Hittite subjects, as labour force for the great building projects that took off on the Greek mainland at precisely that time.⁶³ Although the concept of Anatolians building the Lions Gate and fortifications at Mycenae and Tiryns is attractive, there is little if any proof. A recently published piece of bone with what appear to be cuneiform signs on it,⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Singer 1983, 209-210; Güterbock 1983, 133-138.

⁵⁹ Götze 1986, 40.

⁶⁰ Houwink ten Cate 1983, 37; Hawkins 1998, 17.

⁶¹ For example, is Tawagalawa to be equated with Greek Ete(w)okles and should Ahhiyawa proper therefore be situated in the Thebaid? See Niemeier 1998 with references.

⁶² Güterbock 1990, 165.

⁶³ Bryce 2003b, 203; Sandars 1978, 63-65 notes similarities between Hittite architectural features and the constructions in the Argolid.

⁶⁴ Dostert 2004, 54-55.

found at the *Unterburg* at Tiryns may however indicate eastern presence at this centre, although it is equally possible that it is of Greek manufacture. Whatever may be the case, the fact that the brother of the Ahhiyawan king was engaged in affairs in what must have been felt as an important, but distant part of the Ahhiyawan kingdom, is paralleled by the establishment of members of the royal family as kings of a *Sekundogenitur*, such as Tarhuntašša.

The Tawagalawa letter is also of political-geographical interest because in it, Millawanda is clearly considered part of the Ahhiyawan realm. Given the fact that around 1320 BC, Muršili had conquered the centre because of its support of the Arzawan uprising, somewhere between Muršili's early years and the reign of Hattušili III, the Ahhiyawans must have taken control of the centre. Bryce⁶⁵ suggested that the Hittite King Muwatalli II ceded the centre to the Ahhiyawan king, under the understanding that this would still his hunger for territory on the Anatolian coast. Indeed, the concept is attractive, if only because — as Bryce rightly points out — Ahhiyawa is omitted in the so-called Aleksandu treaty (CTH 76). This text is dated to the reign of Tudhaliya IV and is of interest because it signals the formal incorporation of the kingdom of Wiluša, situated in the Troad, in the Hittite Empire. In it, one would expect references to other powers in the region, especially to the formerly so troublesome Ahhiyawans. As this is not the case, Ahhiyawa apparently was of no threat to the Hittites at that time — which could only be achieved by means of some kind of understanding.

If we accept the hypothesis of Bryce, it is of interest to note that once Ahhiyawa had been tamed by political means, the Hittites lost interest in it and did not even bother to mention the land in a treaty with Wiluša — a country close to the Greek sphere of influence (see Fig. 1). But the Ahhiyawans were not satisfied with Millawanda only and soon, the Hittites were faced with renewed military campaigns in the region of what used to be Arzawa. These took off during the reign of Hattušili III as is indicated in the Tawagalawa letter and in KUB XIX 5, a letter from Manapa-Tarhunda.⁶⁶ The latter was the vassal ruler of the Seha River land and, according to the letter he sent to his overlord, had suffered a "humiliating defeat" at the hands of Piyamaradu. This defeat included the seizure of the island of Lesbos by Piyamaradu, who is reported to have handed the island over to a certain Atpā. As has been noted, Atpā is acting as the Ahhiyawan attaché in Miletus in the Tawagalawa letter. In that same letter, he is said to be the brother-in-law of Piyamaradu.⁶⁷ Clearly, Piyamaradu was acting with the backing of Ahhiyawa.⁶⁸ As if the loss of Lesbos was not enough, the fragmentary first part of the text seems to indicate that Piyamaradu previously had attacked the land Wiluša.⁶⁹ It may well be that the military expedition mounted by Manapa-Tarhunda in order to oust Piyamaradu from Wiluša, ended in the above mentioned humiliation⁷⁰ rather than that he suffered a defeat during an invasion of the Seha River land itself.⁷¹ A reference in the Tawagalawa letter to an earlier military clash between Hittites and Ahhiyawans in Wiluša is likely to have been related to these actions. This, then, would place the Manapa-Tarhunda letter chronologically before the Tawagalawa letter.

⁶⁵ Bryce 1989b, 302.

⁶⁶ Houwink ten Cate 1983.

⁶⁷ Houwink ten Cate 1983, 37.

⁶⁸ Güterbock 1984, 117-118.

⁶⁹ Easton 1985, 192.

⁷⁰ Houwink ten Cate 1983, 50-51.

⁷¹ As Bryce 1989b, 302-303, suggests.

It is clear from the above that Ahhiyawan power and prestige reached a highpoint during the 13th century, crowned in the attribution of the highly prestigious title of Great King to its ruler in the Tawagalawa letter. Not long after the letter was sent however, things may have turned for the worse in Ahhiyawa. A first sign of changing fortunes may be seen in the Millawanda letter. The letter was probably sent by the Hittite King Tudhaliya IV (about 1235 BC) to the ruler of Millawanda or a neighbouring Arzawan land, most probably Mira. Apparently, the king of Hatti does not consider the addressee to be an equal. The letter refers to border conflicts between the Hittite king and the father of the addressee. There is also reference to the activities of Piyamaradu. This letter is considered the last text in which there is a clear relation between Ahhiyawa and Millawanda, although it is not sure whether the centre was still under actual Ahhiyawan control. In fact, Niemeier has argued that around this time Miletus must have been under Hittite sway, which is reflected in Hittite architectural features in the city wall, Hittite funeral gifts, as well as a possible representation of a Hittite god or even king on a locally made (Mycenaean) krater.⁷²

Although his name was subsequently erased, the king of Ahhiyawa was initially included in the list of kings equal in rank to the Hittite king in the Šaušgamuwa Treaty (KUB XXIII 1 + KUB XXXI), concluded between Tudhaliya IV (1237-1209 BC) and his vassal Šaušgamuwa, king of Amurru.⁷³ Additionally, the treaty seems to prohibit Ahhiyawan ships from reaching Assyria (here, the cargo rather than the ships must be meant) which may point to a trade embargo imposed on Assyria.⁷⁴ Generally, two options are being advocated in the scholarly debate with respect to this treaty. The first and I gather most popular explanation for the erasure of Ahhiyawa in the treaty is that at the time that the treaty was drawn up, Ahhiyawa met with some serious setbacks, archaeologically attested as the first destructions of several palatial centres and in the Hittite texts reflected in the final loss of Miletus to the Hittites.⁷⁵ This view is most strongly advocated by Bryce.⁷⁶ The other explanation holds that Ahhiyawa was included in the list by habit of the scribe and that in the end, its inclusion was deemed irrelevant for a treaty with a region so distant from the area of Ahhiyawan influence.⁷⁷ The latter view does not exclude the first and the point remains that, around 1220 BC, Ahhiyawa slowly but surely departed from the international stage. In KUB XXIII 13, dated to the reign of Tudhaliya IV, the king of Ahhiyawa is for the last time reported to be actively engaged in Anatolian affairs, while supporting a rebellion in former Arzawan territory against the Hittites.⁷⁸ With the advance of Tudhaliya and his army, Ahhiyawa disappeared from the Hittite record.

While the above mentioned texts give the impression of a weakened state around 1220 BC, they do include some valuable data on the structure of the Ahhiyawan state. In the first place, it is clear that Ahhiyawa possessed a significant naval capacity, not only to allow diplomatic contacts overseas, but also and foremost, for the shipping of tradable goods. The fact that

⁷² Niemeier 2002, 298; Niemeier 1998, 42.

⁷³ Sommer 1932, 320-327.

⁷⁴ Beckman 1995, 104; Bryce 1998, 350; Singer 1985, 119; against this reading Steiner 1989.

⁷⁵ Possibly reflected in the Millawanda letter, KUB XIX 55; Sommer 1932, 198ff.

⁷⁶ Bryce 2003b, 210-212.

⁷⁷ Kühne/Otten 1971, 15-17; Singer 1985, 119; Wood 1985, 180.

⁷⁸ Güterbock 1983, 138; 1992, 235-243.

Ahhiyawan ships are specifically mentioned in the Šaušgamuwa Treaty indicates that Greek ships frequently arrived at the Levantine ports of Amurru. In the second place, it is clear that by 1220 BC, Ahhiyawa once again had a hostile stance against the Hittites, despite the polite attempts of Hattušili to keep the peace. Probably as a result of this, it had lost Millawanda to the Hittites, though it was to the last moment involved in stirring up western Anatolia against the overlordship of Hatti.

From the texts dealt with above, it is clear that Ahhiyawa posed a significant threat to Hittite interests in western Anatolia. It is reported to have clashed with the Hittites several times. The earliest attestation of military conflicts between Ahhiyawa and Hatti is the Indictment of Madduwatta. In this text, Attariššija is reported to field 100 chariots (although this part of the text is reconstructed) and an unspecified number of infantry against the Hittite general who came to Madduwatta's aid. The battle was fought and both sides sustained losses amongst the officers. Apparently Attariššija was able to effectively resist the Hittites, although in the end, he seems to have retreated. Ahhiyawa is thought to have been allied with Aššuwā against the Hittites⁷⁹ and certainly supported the Arzawan cause during the war against Muršili II. Although the Hittites burnt Millawanda in reprisal for this, the centre returned to the Ahhiyawan side not long thereafter. This may be explained by the hypothesis of Bryce⁸⁰ that the centre returned to the Ahhiyawan realm as a result of politics, but could also be due to an equally hypothetical renewed Ahhiyawan military pressure or Hittite inability to hold the centre. Whatever the case, the fact that Ahhiyawa regained Millawanda soon after the campaign of Muršili cannot mean anything but that Ahhiyawa was a significant military threat. The fact that it was able to hold Millawanda for several decades, while continuing to support anti-Hittite insurrections in western Anatolia stresses that we are dealing here with a considerable military power. As the Linear B tablets only list very small numbers of troops and a limited stock of armaments of which probably only part was service-fit,⁸¹ one wonders whether any of the Mycenaean palace-states could be held accountable for this.

5. Greeks through Egyptian eyes

Apart from the Hittite texts, other references from the Near East to the Aegean and more specifically to mainland Greece are scarce. Mycenaean pottery has been found in great quantities in Cyprus and in the Levant. Several scholars over the years have argued that Mycenaean Greece hardly had any contact with the Near Eastern states and that Cyprus served as a sort of supermarket, where the Aegeans could acquire the desired copper and various prestige objects in exchange for perfumed oil in beautifully decorated containers (mainly stirrup jars). The easterners subsequently acquired the Aegean wares from Cypriot traders, although some argue that Cyprus never had direct contact with eastern states other than the Levantine city-states.⁸² It needs no comment that Cyprus was a major factor in the international trade; its geographical position and its natural resources could hardly fail to make the island of great

⁷⁹ Cline 1996; 1997.

⁸⁰ Bryce 1989b, 302.

⁸¹ Drews 1993, 109; see also Kelder 2005, forthcoming.

⁸² Merrillees 2003, 37.

importance. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the Mycenaeans did not engage in direct contact with Near Eastern states other than Cyprus. The problem however remains that, despite the abundance of Mycenaean imports, neither Cyprus nor the Levantine city-states so far have yielded any (written) testimony to contacts with the Mycenaean world. For that, we need to turn to Egypt.

An Egyptian pendant found at Mycenae and dated to the reign of Amenhotep II may indicate early contact between Egypt and Mycenae,⁸³ which judging by the Greek archaeological record continued at least until the reign of Amenhotep III (1391-1353 BC). Contacts during the reign of this king are indicated by the presence of faience plaques, bearing his cartouche, in the cult centre at Mycenae (see below). Considering the extremely centralized nature of the Egyptian state during the New Kingdom, there is little chance that Egyptian material, such as the faience plaques, came to Mycenae in any other way than by means of direct diplomatic exchange — especially since this material was of royal and ritual connotation. The occurrence of single pieces without cartouche elsewhere in the Aegean does not contradict this.

Additional evidence for direct contact between the Greek mainland and the land of the Pharaohs comes from Egypt itself. The well-known wall paintings of the tombs of Rekhmire and other officials in Egyptian Thebes, showing Minoans bringing their goods to Egypt, make clear that direct contact between the Aegean (Crete) and Egypt did occur in the early 15th century. Even without further evidence, it would be hard to imagine that while the Minoans evidently did make their way to Egypt, the Mycenaeans had either no interest or no means to sail to Egypt in later times. And even if the sudden change in dress of the Minoans depicted on the walls of the Theban tombs would not reflect the coming of the Greeks,⁸⁴ the amount and nature of the Mycenaean pottery found at El Amarna suggests that direct contact between mainland Greece and Egypt existed.⁸⁵ Chemical analysis of the Amarna pottery suggests an Argive provenance.⁸⁶ The bulk of the Mycenaean pottery at Amarna is of closed shape and decorated with bands only. From this it can be concluded that the pottery was primarily imported because of its contents; possibly perfumed olive oil. Aesthetic considerations seem not to have been a major motivation for importing the Mycenaean vessels, although faience imitations of stirrup jars indicate that the Egyptians did appreciate their beauty.⁸⁷

Of course, an Egyptian mission may have set sail to Cyprus, or even the Levant, to acquire Mycenaean pottery and its perfumed contents, but then one would expect the corpus to be of a more diverse origin, rather than the homogenous (Argive) origin as attested for the Amarna pottery. It would be more likely that the Egyptians either went to the source of the pottery and its contents or "that the source came to them". In fact, this has been forcefully argued by Cline who concluded: "Mycenae (...) was the focal point of a deliberate directional trade from Egypt and the Near East."⁸⁸ Evidence for direct contact between Egypt and the Mycenaean world is found on fragments of papyrus at Amarna, depicting a battle between

⁸³ Pendlebury 1930, 55; Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 64, 343, 344.

⁸⁴ Not only the actual arrival of Mycenaean Greeks in Egypt is meant here (Wachsmann 1987; Muhly 1991, 235-247), but also their presumed takeover of Crete around this time.

⁸⁵ Warren/Hankey 1989, 149; Hankey 1993, 111.

⁸⁶ Mommsen/Beier/Diehl/Podzuweit 1992, 29-302.

⁸⁷ Kelder 2002-2003.

⁸⁸ Cline 1995, 95.

Egyptian and Libyan warriors.⁸⁹ Also present are what appears to be Aegeans wearing boar's tusk helmets. There can be little doubt that Mycenaean mercenaries are depicted. The above-mentioned faience plaques at Mycenae are further evidence for strong links between Egypt and Mycenae. Indeed, some have suggested an overall anti-Hittite foreign policy from the Egyptian side and proposed that the sending of these plaques was related to that policy.⁹⁰ But not only archaeological data point towards direct contact between Egypt and the Greek mainland, notably Mycenae.

Scanty textual evidence for direct contacts is present in the topographical lists of the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III at present day Kom el Hetan.⁹¹ The bases of long-gone statues in the central court of the temple display a wide array of foreign lands and cities. Most of the lists at Kom el Hetan refer to areas in Asia, mainly with regard to the traditional "Nine Bows", the enemies of Egypt. The lists are composed in a fairly uniform way. In one column several lands are listed, while a second column lists the cities of these lands. The "lands" of the first column seem to have been conceived as political entities and not merely as geographical concepts. This is illustrated by the listing of the Great Powers Hatti, Babylon and Naharin (Mittani), dependencies such as the Hittite *Sekundogenitur* Carchemish and smaller states such as Aššur.⁹² There are some exceptions, but these appear to have been (Aramaic) tribes; unsettled, pastoral people that started to infiltrate the Near East around this time and would cause much trouble at the end of the Late Bronze Age. Thus, the Kom el Hetan texts could arguably be seen as a political map of the then known world. This would also fit the Egyptian ideology, as the chiefs of these entities were supposed to be subdued to the cosmic pharaoh.

One of these lists is of special interest. In it, two lands are listed. One is called *Keftiu*, the Egyptian designation for Crete. The other name, *Tnj*, is more problematic and only sporadically appears in the Egyptian records. Compared to the other lists, it is reasonable to assume that the first land mentioned is closest to Egypt, and roughly indicates the further direction of the list. In this case that would be to the north, to mainland Greece.

A second column with names seems to refer to centres rather than lands. Edel proposes the following identification for these names: Amnisos, Phaistos, Kydonia, Mycenae, *dq's*, Messenia, Nauplia (?), Kythera, Ilios (?), Knossos, Amnisos and Lyktos. The enigmatic *dq's* (*di-qa-ê-s*) has been identified by some as Tegea, by some as the upper Helisson valley, by Helck as Διπαιεῖς and by Edel as the Thebaid.⁹³ The latter identification seems to have been generally accepted. The name Ilios for *wi-'i₄-li-ja*, however, is not generally accepted as a correct identification.⁹⁴ *Wi-'i₄-li-ja* has also been identified as Aulis,⁹⁵ which if correct would fit nicely in Edel's identification of *dq's* (as Aulis is supposed to have been the principal harbour of Thebes) and most recently as Elis.⁹⁶

⁸⁹ Parkinson/Schofield 1995, 126; Parkinson/Schofield 1994, 157-170.

⁹⁰ Cline in O'Connor/Cline 1998, 250.

⁹¹ Edel 1960.

⁹² Edel 1960, 8, 9.

⁹³ Helck 1995, 26 and references therein; Edel 1988, 30.

⁹⁴ Helck 1995, 25-26.

⁹⁵ Goedicke 1969, 10.

⁹⁶ Latacz 2001, 163.

Despite the difficulties mentioned above, it is beyond doubt that the Kom el Hetan list reflects the Aegean, that is Crete and the Peloponnese and possibly the Thebaid. It is therefore likely that Egyptian sailors indeed did sail the shores of mainland Greece at the time of Amenhotep III. This may be reflected in the occurrence of an Egyptian Late Bronze Age anchor in Attica, although its original context is unknown.⁹⁷ Both archaeological data and textual sources remove any doubt in this field. What seems clear from the Kom el Hetan list and the archaeological data combined is that Mycenae was a destination of Egyptian missions, at least during the reign of Amenhotep III.

If Egyptians sailed to Greece, it is equally likely that Greeks sailed to Egypt.⁹⁸ Muhly's remark "the point is that excluding the Mycenaeans makes no more sense than attributing everything to them" is fitting.⁹⁹ With this in mind, it is of interest that diplomatic contacts between the Egyptian court and a king of *Tnj* are attested even earlier, in the Annals of Thutmose III (42nd regnal year; ca. 1437 BC). In an inscription dealing with the king's military exploits in the Levant, it is stated that the king of *Tnj* sent a drinking set consisting of a silver jug in *Keftiu*-style and three copper cups with silver handles as a gift to the campaigning Egyptian monarch.¹⁰⁰ This not only stresses the fact that Mycenaeans made their way to the Levant, but also demonstrates that *Tnj* was perceived as a veritable state, headed by a king. *Tnj*, Tanaju, has been equated with the ethnonym Danaoi — the name of one of the legendary royal families in the Argolid, which came to be used as a designation for the troops under the command of Agamemnon in the Iliad.¹⁰¹

The Egyptian textual record thus indicates the presence of a large territorial state called *Tnj* (from now on Tanaju), of which at least two centres are known. These are Mycenae and Nauplia. Tanaju also included several smaller regions, such as Messenia, the Thebaid, and the island of Kythera. Elis may have been part of Tanaju too. Tanaju must have been of some importance. It was listed on a par with Keftiu and its kings had diplomatic contact with the pharaoh. As had been noted, the Egyptians seem not to have been aware of an Aegean kingdom called Ahhiyawa. The fact that the Hittites apparently were not aware of the Aegean kingdom Tanaju leads to the suspicion that the two were one and the same. But before we jump to conclusions, we should evaluate our data concerning the Late Bronze Age Aegean.

⁹⁷ Now on display in the Piraeus museum; Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 293.

⁹⁸ Lambrou-Phillipson (1991, 14-15) argued against Egyptian visits to the Aegean, on grounds that "certain New Kingdom texts" implied that the Egyptians perceived Crete as a land to be approached from the east (this corroborates with the currents in the Mediterranean and does not at all exclude the possibility of direct contacts, but rather suggests — as Lambrou-Phillipson herself admits — a voyage via the Levant, possibly Cyprus and Anatolia to the Aegean), while discarding other texts that implied that direct contact did occur as inconclusive. The anchor in Attica is rather unsatisfying set aside noting that without context it has only limited weight (true, but its occurrence still needs to be explained), while stating that the occurrence of "ordinary" and perishable Egyptian consumption goods in Crete "in no way indicates a direct contact with Egypt". The occurrence of an "Egyptian" at Knossos (Palaima 1991, 280) is not mentioned at all. Despite the lack of conclusive evidence for direct trade, I feel that the data as presented both in this article as in Lambrou-Phillipson's are overwhelmingly in favour of regular contact, rather than suggesting the contrary.

⁹⁹ Muhly 1991, 238.

¹⁰⁰ Latacz 2001, 164; Haider 1988, 10, reads "iron" cups — which would make the gift even more extraordinary.

¹⁰¹ Helck 1995, 24; Latacz 2001, 166.

6. Characteristics of Ahhiyawa, Tanaju, and LBA Greece

As has been demonstrated, the Hittites knew of a (Great) Kingdom Ahhiyawa, which must be situated somewhere in the Mycenaean world. According to the texts, it had the following characteristics:

1. Ahhiyawa was a composite state, consisting of a core and at least one dependency.
2. Ahhiyawa was ruled by one king.
3. Millawanda was a dependency of that king.
4. The ruler of Millawanda received written instructions.
5. The king of Ahhiyawa upheld written correspondence with the Hittite king.
6. Ahhiyawan nobility had dynastic ties with Anatolian royalty (i.e. Piyamaradu — Atpā).
7. Ahhiyawan royalty had personal ties with Hittite royalty.
8. Ahhiyawa was a naval power.
9. Ahhiyawa had the military capacity to successfully campaign in western Anatolia.

While the kingdom of Ahhiyawa is attested from circa 1400 BC onwards, Egyptian sources indicate the presence of that of Tanaju from about 1437 BC onwards. Tanaju is characterised as following:

1. It was headed by one king.
2. Its king upheld diplomatic contact with pharaoh.
3. It comprised a large part of the Peloponnese and probably included the Thebaid.
4. Mycenae and Nauplia were its major centres.

While contemporary texts from Anatolia and Egypt thus present us with a Greek world with at least one major territorial state, Linear B texts and the archaeological record present the following view. Greece as a whole at this time is characterized as a patchwork of several palatial centres, sharing the same material culture, language and way of administration.¹⁰² The palatial centres were governed by their respective kings, all of whom had a wide array of nobility and officials to support on. The most important of these officials seems to have been the *lawagetas*, but also the *eqeta*, the followers, were of high standing. All of these officials possessed stretches of land, industries, people (slaves) and specialists (such as smiths): the property of the *wanax* however, was the largest by far. The palatial centres upheld contacts between each other, as shipments of goods from one centre to the other are attested. Also, people including slaves from other regions are reported. Military forces are active both within the states as well as beyond the borders, albeit in small numbers, but no reference is made to forces from other states.

The characteristics of Ahhiyawa from the Hittite texts, of Tanaju in the Egyptian record, and those of Greece from the Linear B texts allow for a variety of explanations. We could be dealing with two larger territorial states, i.e. Tanaju and Ahhiyawa, but the problem is that there is hardly any room for the two of them in the Late Bronze Age Aegean. Also, the

¹⁰² Galaty/Parkinson 1999, 5.

absence of any reference to either of these in Linear B texts is problematic. Another option is that Tanaju and Ahhiyawa were one and the same, but then the problem remains that the Linear B texts are remarkably silent concerning interregional policies. It may have been that both the Egyptians and the Hittites were wrong in perceiving a large territorial state, whereas they were in fact dealing with just one of the many local kings. This would explain the lack of references to greater political entities in the Mycenaean world. As the Egyptians and the Hittites seem to have been well aware of the political composition of other states at that time — even remote ones —, this concept is implausible. It would also be difficult to explain how some petty king would have been able to muster enough troops to effectively resist Hittite pressure in western Anatolia for some two centuries.

As we are now dealing with three seemingly contradictory datasets, i.e. the Egyptian sources indicating the existence of the Kingdom of Tanaju, the Hittite sources indicating the existence of the Great Kingdom of Ahhiyawa, and the Linear B texts indicating a politically fragmented landscape, it is of importance to establish how these data relate to each other. While we know the geographical composition of Tanaju from the Kom el Hetan text, the geographical extent of Ahhiyawa remains obscure. It is of importance to establish the "core land" and the capital of Ahhiyawa. There can be no doubt that one of the major palatial centres once was the capital of Ahhiyawa; the question remains which of these centres it was. With the capitals of other Great Kings (in the Near East) at the time in mind, it is clear that the Greek palaces — even the largest- cannot compare to the greatness of the palaces of the Near East. Still, the capital of Ahhiyawa should display a number of features:

1. *Monumentality*: Both the palace and its surroundings should be imposing, a marker of the might of the ruler. The palace should stand out in the Mycenaean world in size and splendour. The royal tombs should be equally impressive.
2. *Size*: Not only the palace and its citadel, but the surrounding "lower town" should be of considerable size.
3. *Imports*: In general one can safely assume that the palace was strongly engaged in trade and exchange. As a consequence, even when allowing for a substantial role of private trade, one can assume that at the principal centre of any (Great) Kingdom the greatest amount of exotica was accumulated. As one would expect Ahhiyawa to have been the most important political entity in the Late Bronze Age Aegean, one would similarly expect its capital to hold the largest stock of exotica, i.e. *orientalia*. These *orientalia* came both from vassal states and independent entities with which the state had political dealings.

As textual evidence in this respect has been demonstrated to be inconclusive, it must be archaeology that should lead the way. Therefore, an overview of the major palatial centres of Late Bronze Age Greece will follow. Attention will be directed to features mentioned above. After that, it will be evaluated which of the centres fits best with that what one expects of the capital of the Great King of Ahhiyawa. Two major sites will be left out of the discussion: Gla in the Kopais Lake (proven to be non palatial)¹⁰³ and the Menelaion near Sparta, which had lost its importance during LH IIIB.

¹⁰³ Iakovidis 2000.

7. Major palatial centres

Pylos

The palace of Pylos, covering a surface of circa 14 to 15 hectares during LH IIIB,¹⁰⁴ dominated an area roughly equivalent to the modern province of Messenia, situated in the south-western Peloponnese.¹⁰⁵ Its status is not only reflected in the architecture and geographical position of the site, but also attested in Linear B texts. In these texts, it becomes clear that Pylos not only dominated western Messenia, but also the region east of it, with a regional capital called *Re-u-ko-to-ro*, in Classical Greek known as Λευκτρον.¹⁰⁶ The site is probably situated at modern Thouria or Ellinika.¹⁰⁷ There can be little doubt that Pylos was a major Mycenaean centre, of considerable economic and military importance. Despite all that, I share Mountjoy's objections against Pylos as Ahhiyawan capital.¹⁰⁸ The Pylians had dealings with Asia Minor, as in the Pylos tablets there is mentioning of "women of Asia" and more specific, a reference to Halikarnassos,¹⁰⁹ but these references appear to have had more to do with raids or trading encounters, than with political involvement. However, it is clear that Pylos was a naval power, as this is indicated by the presence of an artificial harbour south-west of the palace and references to naval activity in Linear B texts,¹¹⁰ although this does not mean much in political respect.

A major argument against Pylos being the capital of Ahhiyawa is the lack of any archaeological evidence for close contact between Pylos and the outside world, which is to be expected of the capital of a Great King. In total, four pieces of *orientalia* have been found: one Eighteenth Dynasty scarab found in *tholos* tomb 1 (in LH IIA context), two joining fragments from a porphyrite bowl of Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian origin (found in uncertain context) and an Canaanite jar from *tholos* tomb 3, in LH I/II–IIIB context.¹¹¹ Compared to other centres such as Mycenae or Thebes, this is very little. In addition, the Egyptian bowl is thought to have reached Pylos via Crete and consequently cannot be considered evidence for foreign contacts.¹¹² Moreover, the absence of monumental architecture comparable to Mycenae's Lion Gate makes it unlikely that Pylos ever was the seat of the Great King of Ahhiyawa as mentioned in the Hittite texts.

Tiryns

The ancients praised the citadel of Tiryns for its mighty walls (*Iliad*, II, 559; Pausanias, II, 25, 8; Pindar, frg. 6.642) and Homer devoted a part of his *Iliad* to the deeds of its legendary king, Diomedes (*Iliad*, V). Even in our time, the walls of Tiryns rise from the surrounding plain like a ship from the sea, as one historian once put it.¹¹³ The citadel of Tiryns was for the first time fortified by means of a cyclopean wall during the LH IIIA1 period, in the early

¹⁰⁴ Bennet/Shelmerdine 2001, 136: including the lower town. The palace proper should be about 1 ha.

¹⁰⁵ Bennett 1995, 587–602; Bennett 1999a, 17–18.

¹⁰⁶ Bennett 1999, 10; Chadwick 1973, 139.

¹⁰⁷ Dickinson 1994, 81.

¹⁰⁸ Mountjoy 1998, 49, although I do not share her arguments.

¹⁰⁹ Chadwick 1973, 417.

¹¹⁰ Shelmerdine 2001, 339; Palaima 1991, 285–309.

¹¹¹ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 368; Koppes 1976, 476; Blegen/Rawson 1966, 65, 71; Cline 1994, 190.

¹¹² Warren 1969, 107, 114.

¹¹³ Wood 1985, 81.

14th century BC.¹¹⁴ This wall was extended in the late 14th–early 13th century BC (LH IIIB1) only to be altered in the mid-13th century, when the outer gate was relocated. In its final form, the circuit had a length of 725 meter. The similarity between this gate and the Lion Gate at Mycenae, in dimensions and construction material, is striking.¹¹⁵ Indeed, these constructions have been thought to be the work of Anatolian labourers (see above). The fact that the famous galleries in Tiryns, constructed in the second half of the 13th century BC, show a remarkable resemblance to the gallery at Hattuša, suggests that Tiryns stood in close contact with Anatolia during that period.¹¹⁶

Anatolian imports, however, have not been found. Contact with Cyprus is attested by several bowls of Cypriote provenance dated to LH IIIB or B2, as well as terracotta wall brackets.¹¹⁷ Lambrou-Phillipson¹¹⁸ listed only five other finds of eastern provenance: two cylinder seals,¹¹⁹ of which one was found in Tomb 19 at the nearby cemetery at the hill Profitis Ilias, a sherd of a Canaanite jar in LH IIIB2 context, a figurine from Syro-Palestine,¹²⁰ and the so-called Tiryns treasure — in LH IIIC context. To this, I should add the recent discovery in the *Unterburg* of a piece of bone with possible cuneiform on it.¹²¹ The settlement surrounding the citadel was sizable. Though its exact extent during the palatial period is not established, it seems that the settlement reached its greatest size during LH IIIC, i.e. after the palace had fallen into disuse. The area of the LH IIIC settlement is estimated at 25 hectares, although the lower town was never densely populated.¹²²

Mycenae

After the fall of the palaces around 1200 BC, Mycenae was one of the centres where habitation continued. Indeed, it remained an independent polis until the Persian wars, after which it finally was incorporated by nearby Argos. As a result of this continuous habitation, the archaeological record has been severely disturbed. Apart from man-caused disturbance, nature further disturbed the picture as part of the palace was swept into the adjoining ravine. Consequently, the archaeological data from Mycenae and especially from the palace are lacunose at best.

Dickinson postulated that Mycenae was not a typical settlement site in Late Bronze Age Greece.¹²³ Indeed, several features make the site stand out amongst the others, although future research at other centres may alter this picture. These distinctive features are:

1. The quantity and range of the grave goods and degree of wealth in the Shaft Graves of Grave Circle A.
2. The nine *tholos* tombs, forming a sequence of increasing fineness and elaboration and of which six belong to a single period, LH IIA.

¹¹⁴ Kilian 1988b, 134.

¹¹⁵ Papademetriou 2001, 22.

¹¹⁶ Sandars 1987, 65.

¹¹⁷ Cline 1994, 268 ff.; Kilian 1981, 184; Cline reported at least 3 vessels, not counting the wall brackets.

¹¹⁸ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 360–361.

¹¹⁹ Pini 1983, 118–119.

¹²⁰ Seeden 1980, 130.

¹²¹ Dostert 2004, 54–55.

¹²² Papademetriou 2001, 53.

¹²³ Dickinson, unpublished, quoted in French, 2005.

3. The early construction of Cyclopean walls (with Tiryns).
4. The "Houses" outside the walls with Linear B tablets.
5. Craft production including stone bowls, faience and metal-inlay.
6. Stone relief work on a large scale.
7. Pottery manufacture and export.
8. Roads and bridges.

French adds some 200 known chamber tombs to this list, which is only surpassed by the supposed number at Nauplion.¹²⁴ It is clear that Mycenae was a place of extraordinary importance in the Late Bronze Age Greek world. In addition, Mycenae dominated a large territory during the Late Bronze Age, primarily towards the north, in Korinthia.¹²⁵ Indeed, Mycenae must have been the major centre in the Argolid during the Mycenaean era too. The settlement around the citadel encompassed approximately 32 hectares,¹²⁶ while the citadel walls of circa 900 m cover an area of 3 hectares.¹²⁷ The palace itself covers an area of at least 1.1 hectare,¹²⁸ not counting the other buildings within the citadel — which could arguably be seen as subsidiaries of the palace. Not only is the *megaron* significantly larger than the one at Tiryns,¹²⁹ but also the size of the acropolis surrounded by a fortification wall is larger. The LH III B fortification wall of Mycenae in all respects matches the walls of Tiryns, and even surpasses these with the splendid construction known as the Lion Gate. Sandars noted that the style of the Lion Gate, which she called a "heavy style", may well relate to the style of the Lion Gate at Büyükkale.¹³⁰ Also, there is a clear parallel between the tunnel to the well at Mycenae and the galleries of Hattuša. Bryce proposes a connection with the deportation of Anatolians as mentioned in the Tawagalawa letter, in suggesting that thousands of Hittite subjects were deported to Greece to work on the new fortifications of Mycenae.¹³¹

Apart from the scale of the citadel and the stylistic considerations, further archaeological data strongly suggest that Mycenae was the major centre in mainland Greece. Although the number of imports has not been securely established (the numbers provided by Cline and Lambrou-Phillipson differ), the amount of *orientalia* found at Mycenae is unsurpassed. The corpus includes objects of Egyptian, Anatolian, and Syrian origin. *Orientalia* have been found in the citadel, the houses immediately outside the citadel and the necropolis and seem to have reached the centre mainly during LH III B (see Table 2). Some of the houses close to the citadel are thought to have been of individuals involved in palace-controlled interregional trade and exchange.¹³² Following Cline¹³³ in applying the so-called *Central Place Model*, which means that prestige objects end up in the central palace, while the bulk of the practical imports remain at the port of entry, one could assume that trade with the East must have been

¹²⁴ French 2005, 125.

¹²⁵ Bintliff/Carter 1977, 91 ff.; Cherry/Davis 2001, 154-156.

¹²⁶ Wardle/Wardle 2001, 17.

¹²⁷ Symeonoglou 1985, 32.

¹²⁸ Iakovidis 1983, 57.

¹²⁹ It is the largest one known, see Iakovidis 1983.

¹³⁰ Sandars 1987, 64.

¹³¹ Bryce 2003, 203.

¹³² Although some degree of private undertaking cannot be excluded; Tournavitou 1995, 298.

¹³³ Cline 1994, 87.

even more substantial than the present amount already suggests. Cline¹³⁴ presents 83 objects of Near Eastern origin found at Mycenae.

The larger part of the corpus was of Egyptian origin. According to Lambrou-Phillipson, 40 objects from Egypt were found, whereas Cline (see Table 2) listed 29 *aegyptiaca*. These finds included several faience plaques bearing the cartouche of Pharaoh Amenhotep III. The plaques which were found in the cult area are of special interest in the light of possible diplomatic ties, as these were used in a manner reminiscent to their original, native purpose.¹³⁵ Furthermore, faience scarabs have been found both in the cult area as well as in tombs.¹³⁶

The goods from Mesopotamia comprise 7 beads from grave I in Grave Circle A (LH I), a pendant from the shrine area in the so-called Tsountas House dated LH III B, and a glass plaque from the same area.¹³⁷ Cypriote material is scarcely found but includes a haematite seal found in a LH IIB-III A1 chamber tomb and a faience goblet from an LH III A1 chamber tomb.¹³⁸ On top of these objects, there are an unspecified number (2 or 4) of copper ingots from Cyprus, found below the palace close to the west portal, and 12 fragments of ingots from the Poros Wall Hoard.¹³⁹ Perhaps more important are the finds of Anatolian origin at Mycenae, as artefacts from Asia Minor are only rarely found in Greece. Cline listed 12 Anatolian objects in Aegean contexts, 3 of which are from Mycenae. These are a silver rhyton¹⁴⁰ from shaft grave IV,¹⁴¹ a golden pin from the same context,¹⁴² and a steatite seal/bulla from a LH III A2 chamber tomb,¹⁴³ although this object may be of Syro-Palestinian provenance as well. Interestingly, no Anatolian artefacts dated to the 13th century have been found.

It needs to be stressed that the amount of imported objects found at a site does not necessarily relate to the intensity of (trading) contact with other areas, as several objects may have been imported at one stroke or, as seems the case with an Egyptian made alabastron found in a LH III chamber tomb,¹⁴⁴ via other exchange partners, such as Crete. Still, the imported goods at Mycenae do prove that there were contacts with several distant lands, of which the Levant and Egypt seem to have been most prominent.

Table 2: Orientalia at Mycenae (after Cline, 1995a)

PROVENANCE / CONTEXT	LH I – II	LH III	LH IIIA	LH IIIA-B	LH IIIB	LH IIIC	TOTAL
Egypt	5	4	3	1	15	1	29
Syria-Palestine	-	-	2	5	27	3	37
Cyprus	-	2	2	-	-	-	4
Anatolia	2	-	1	-	-	-	3
Mesopotamia	7	-	-	-	2	-	9

¹³⁴ Cline 1995a, 92, table 2.

¹³⁵ O'Connor/Cline 1998, 247-250; Pendlebury 1930, 55; see also above.

¹³⁶ Cline 1994, 145-146.

¹³⁷ Cline 1994, 140, no. 69 and 143, no. 100.

¹³⁸ Cline 1994, 153, no. 179 and 197, no. 165.

¹³⁹ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 335.

¹⁴⁰ Originally a silver stag, but later reworked; Niemeier 1999, 148.

¹⁴¹ Cline 1994, 213, no. 716.

¹⁴² Cline 1994, 142, no. 87.

¹⁴³ Cline 1994, 162, no. 237.

¹⁴⁴ Cline 1994, 164, no. 248.

Thebes

There has been little doubt that Thebes was a major centre in the Mycenaean world. According to Linear B texts, it seems that Thebes during the Late Bronze Age controlled much of eastern Boeotia¹⁴⁵ and, according to some, part of Euboea¹⁴⁶. Its importance is stressed by the amount of eastern imports which have been found in abundance at the Kadmeion hill, suggesting that the centre had close ties with the Near East. A new but as yet unpublished reading of a Hittite tablet reportedly includes the name Kadmos in connection to Ahhiyawa, which, if true, might suggest that Thebes was actively engaged in Anatolian affairs.¹⁴⁷ The problem with these reports is that as yet there is no publication at hand. It may concern a new reading of tablet KUB XXVI 91, proposed by Starke, but this reading is not generally accepted.¹⁴⁸

Because the modern town of Thebes is built on top of the Kadmeion hill archaeological research has been limited to small-scale rescue excavations. Nonetheless, the remains of what seems to have been two successive palatial complexes had been uncovered. The first is called "the House of Kadmos"¹⁴⁹ and was destroyed during early LH IIIA2¹⁵⁰ or early LH IIIB1.¹⁵¹ It covered an area of circa 2.4 hectares.¹⁵² During LH IIIB1 a new palace — the New Kadmeion — was constructed. Due to the sporadic excavations this structure is as yet poorly understood. It is thought that the New Kadmeion included at least one large courtyard, reminiscent of Minoan palaces, which if true makes Thebes unique. This second palace is calculated to have covered some 2.1 hectares at most. In size the Theban palace would be second only to the citadel of nearby Gla (which was not a palatial centre).

It seems that Thebes and, more specifically, the New Kadmeion were destroyed by fire during LH IIIB1, around 1250 BC,¹⁵³ although the dating of this destruction has been challenged.¹⁵⁴ The extent of this destruction remains, at any rate, difficult to establish. It did not mean the end of Thebes, as tombs and pottery finds suggest the site was inhabited throughout sub-Mycenaean times. It is unclear, however, whether palatial life revived. Andrikou¹⁵⁵ postulated that part of the Linear B archive at Thebes should be dated to the end of LH IIIB2, while Symeonoglou attributes the final collapse of the palatial system to the LH IIIB1 destruction.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁵ Aravantinos/Godart/Sacconi 2001, 356.

¹⁴⁶ Sergent 1994, 370. Eder (2003, 303) also argues for this thesis, noting that "aus Amarnthos und Karystos werden Tiere nach Theben geliefert...", which seems to be her main reason for attributing Theban dominance over parts of Euboea. Thus she argues that, as Homer's Catalogue of ships presents Euboea as an independent entity, the Catalogue cannot be a representation of Mycenaean times.

¹⁴⁷ Brandau/Schickert/Jablonka 2004, 96.

¹⁴⁸ Or rather, rejected; written communication of P. Goedegebuure.

¹⁴⁹ Κεραμοπούλος 1909, 57 ff.

¹⁵⁰ Symeonoglou 1985, 49.

¹⁵¹ Dakouri-Hild 2001, 101.

¹⁵² Symeonoglou 1985, 45.

¹⁵³ "There are some grounds for believing that part, if not all, of the later so-called 'New' Palace at Thebes was destroyed at this [LH IIIB early] time, although not by fire" (Rutter 2004). This means no later than 1250 BC. Shelmerdine (2001) considers the discussion closed in favour of a destruction at the end of LH IIIB1, and a later one at the end of B2.

¹⁵⁴ For a LH IIIB2 late date, Snodgrass 1975, 314; Dakouri-Hild 2001, 106-107.

¹⁵⁵ Andrikou 1999, 87; followed by Latacz 2001b, 288

¹⁵⁶ Symeonoglou 1985, 60.

Following the collapse of the palatial administration, it seems that the citadel was abandoned and later was used as a burial ground. A new settlement is thought to have risen on the north slope of the Kadmeia hill (see Fig. 4), although scarcely any trace of it has been uncovered. Prior to LH IIIC, it seems that habitation outside the citadel was scarce at best.

Several excavations revealed the remains of fortification walls, by some thought to be Mycenaean and as such related to the legendary seven gates of Thebes in the story of the Seven against Thebes (Sophokles, *Antigone*, 141-143).¹⁵⁷ Keramopoulos suggested that the walls protected the whole of the Kadmeia and that seven gates once stood on the main exit roads of the modern town (see Fig. 3), but recent research points towards a more modest course.¹⁵⁸ Still, the walls with a reconstructed length of 1700 m surrounded an area of 19.2 hectares.¹⁵⁹ Depending on the population density Thebes may have housed up to 7680 citizens around 1300 BC (see Table 3; note that the palace area has been included).¹⁶⁰

Table 3: Population of Thebes in the Late Bronze Age (following Symeonoglou 1985, 63)

BC	150 PER HA.	300 PER HA.	400 PER HA.
1300	2880	5760	7680
1100	630	1260	1680

An interesting find is the collection of cylinder seals in the New Kadmeion at Thebes. According to Lambrou-Phillipson a total of 39 seals were uncovered, all except for one of these seals were made of highly prized lapis lazuli. Demakopoulou and Konsola noted three additional specimens.¹⁶¹ Porada proposed that the seals were sent to Thebes by the Assyrian King Tukulti-Ninurta I, after obtaining the seals during his campaign against Babylon.¹⁶² However, her dating of the seals is debatable and the LH IIIB early destruction of the palace makes an earlier date of deposit shortly before 1250 more likely. These finds prove that Thebes stood in contact with the East, most notably with the Levant and Cyprus. Contact with the East, especially Mesopotamia and the Levant is further indicated by the following finds: an ivory hilt of uncertain provenance, two ivory furniture legs from the excavations at Pelopidas street (palace area?), and a pyxis in a tomb at the Kastelli Hill — all of Levantine or Mesopotamian origin and all in LH IIIA1 or B1 context.¹⁶³ Also, a Canaanite jar has been found in a tomb on the nearby Megalo Kastelli Hill.¹⁶⁴

Contact with Cyprus must have been close. This is reflected in the fact that ten of the cylinder seals were of Cypriote origin. Contacts with Anatolia are attested in Linear B texts and there even is reference to a man from Miletus apparently living in Thebes. As is the case elsewhere however, contact with Anatolia seems to have been fairly limited as far as the archaeological data are concerned. Only one seal may be of Anatolian origin, although a Syrian

¹⁵⁷ Demakopoulou/Konsola 1981, 20-22.

¹⁵⁸ Symeonoglou 1985, 26-32.

¹⁵⁹ Symeonoglou 1985, 31-32.

¹⁶⁰ Different models have been proposed by McDonald/Rapp 1972; Renfrew 1972; Frankfort 1950, non vidi — the latter is only applicable in fortified centres and has been proposed in a Mesopotamian setting.

¹⁶¹ Demakopoulou/Konsola 1981, 51.

¹⁶² Porada 1981-1982, 69.

¹⁶³ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 312.

¹⁶⁴ Edwards 1979, 131, note 144.

provenance seems to be equally conceivable, as Porada noted similarities between the Theban seal and the seal of a Pihaziti, perhaps an official at Carchemish.¹⁶⁵

The amount of *orientalia* found at Thebes is second only to Mycenae. Consequently, it is clear that Thebes was actively engaged with the outside world, although the scope of its foreign contacts seems to have been more limited than is the case at Mycenae, as Egyptian (and Anatolian) artefacts are hardly present in the Theban corpus. It needs to be stressed however, that this may well be due to the lacunose archaeological dataset. Still, as little monumental architecture is found, the importance of Thebes within the Mycenaean world now is reflected primarily in the size of the settlement and in the precious finds.

Table 4: *Orientalia* at Mycenae and Thebes

PROVENANCE / SITE	MYCENAE	THEBES
Egypt	40-29	2-1
Syria-Palestine, Mesopotamia	14-46	32-29
Asia Minor	2-3	1-0
Cyprus	6-4	10-11

NB. First row following Lambrou-Phillipson 1990; second row following Cline 1994

Orchomenos

Thebes was without a doubt a major centre in Boeotia. To its northwest, however, was another important centre: Orchomenos. Because of later habitation, at Orchomenos too excavations have been small-scale and sporadic. Mycenaean architecture has been uncovered, parts of which some thought to be the remains of the ancient palace.¹⁶⁶ This seems unlikely, but the discovery of fragments of frescoes and a considerable amount of pottery ranging from LH I to LH IIIC make it clear that the buildings were related to the as yet undiscovered palace. Possibly, we are dealing here with storage rooms, as *pithoi* with the remains of grains and grapes were found inside the structures. The fact that the walls of the structures were decorated with frescoes does not negate this option, as at nearby Gla, buildings that have been demonstrated to have served as storehouses were decorated in this manner, too.¹⁶⁷ Frescoes resembling those at Tiryns indicate the importance of the building and allow for a palatial setting. The abundance of the colour blue in these frescoes further adds to the status of the building as pigments for this colour had to be imported and consequently were status-related.¹⁶⁸ Thus, although we are not dealing here with the palace proper, the buildings that are uncovered may be considered as evidence for the existence of a palace nearby.¹⁶⁹

The majority of the pottery can be dated to LH IIIB1.¹⁷⁰ During this period both the quantity of the pottery and the variety of shapes and decoration are largest. LH IIIB2 and C pottery is not absent but rare.¹⁷¹ Based on the pottery, one could assume the *floruit* of Orchomenos was LH IIIB1; the final decades of the 14th century to halfway the 13th century BC, while LH IIIB2 is marked by a decline, at least in terms of the quality of the pottery.

¹⁶⁵ Porada 1981-1982, 46-49.

¹⁶⁶ Catling 1984-1985, 31.

¹⁶⁷ Compare Iakovidis 2001.

¹⁶⁸ Buchholz 1985, 516.

¹⁶⁹ Iakovidis 2001, 153.

¹⁷⁰ Mountjoy 1983, 11.

¹⁷¹ Mountjoy 1983, 11.

The so-called Treasury of Minyas at Orchomenos equals the famous Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae, adding further to the prestige of Orchomenos. Moreover, the great *tholos* tomb at Orchomenos so closely resembles the treasury of Atreus at Mycenae in measurement and technique that Dörpfeld attributed both to the same architect.¹⁷² Although neither the palace, nor the greater part of the Late Bronze Age city have been uncovered, there can be no doubt that Orchomenos was an important Mycenaean centre. As an inland centre, it cannot be considered a naval power, and its apparent wealth is supposed to have generated by agricultural means rather than by trade and exchange. This is further illustrated by Bulle, who reports that the paleobotanical remains indicate a thriving agricultural centre, where apart from grains wine was produced.¹⁷³ He further adds that this would indicate the impoldering of nearby Lake Kopais, though I gather that this statement is not purely based on the incomplete archaeological dataset but on legends as well.

Iolkos¹⁷⁴

Iolkos in Thessaly can be seen as the northernmost major centre of the Mycenaean world. The area has long been *terra incognita* for Late Bronze Age archaeologists. Legendary Iolkos has often been placed at present day Volos, but recent excavations near the Neolithic mound of Dimini suggest that the city of Jason may be elsewhere after all. In fact, two *tholos* tombs of rather poor quality at Dimini were already known for a long time.¹⁷⁵ These tombs are usually associated with palatial centres.

So far, excavation has uncovered at least two *megara*, of which one is flanked by a long corridor, giving access to storage rooms or workshops. This *megaron* was reached through a partially roofed courtyard, which was equipped with drainage tubes. Plaster embellished both the walls and the floors. An altar was uncovered in a *megaron* to the northeast, pointing towards use as a ritual area. A large amount of storage jars was tossed up against a wall of an adjoining storage house. The whole area, which I am inclined to consider palatial, was reached through a *propylon* reached by a long street leading towards the settlement. Here, several large houses have been found. There can be little doubt that this was an important centre and the one to be equated with legendary Iolkos. A Linear B inscription adds to the impression of a literate, powerful palatial centre in Thessaly. The *floruit* of Mycenaean Dimini seems to have been the 14th and 13th centuries BC. As at most of the contemporary major Mycenaean sites, a destruction layer marked the end of LH IIIB2.

As excavation reports so far are lacking, imported goods from Dimini are scarcely reported. Lambrou-Phillipson lists only one scarab, apparently found in one of the *tholoi*, but it is possible that more *orientalia* will be found at the centre itself.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Reported in Wood 1985, 147.

¹⁷³ Bulle 1907, 61.

¹⁷⁴ I visited Dimini during spring 2003, being kindly guided by a member of the excavation team. The following account is due to that visit, although a brief description is included in Schnapp-Gourbeillon 2003, 31.

¹⁷⁵ Θεοχαρη 1979.

¹⁷⁶ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 320.

Rhodes

Apart from the major centres on the Greek mainland, other sites have been suggested as the capital of the Great King of Ahhiyawa, mainly on Crete or on Rhodes. However, a site on Crete is an unlikely candidate for a number of reasons. As has been noted, Crete is known in Egyptian sources as *k-f-tj-w*, usually transcribed *Keftiu*, while the name Tanaju (*Tnj*) was used to refer to the lands beyond Crete.¹⁷⁷ Contact with Crete was quite close until the reign of Thutmose III, after which Crete seems to have lost its importance to Egypt.¹⁷⁸ Despite a subsequent recovery at some sites, destructions at the major Cretan sites including Knossos around 1450 make a direct association with Ahhiyawa unlikely, as Ahhiyawa for the first time appears in the Hittite records some decades later.

Rhodes is a more plausible option to be the heartland of Ahhiyawa, and its major centre therefore would be candidate to be the kingdom's capital.¹⁷⁹ Deger-Jalkotzy argues, however, that "there is, moreover, no evidence that any island polity could have been on a par with the leading states".¹⁸⁰ The major centre on Rhodes would be Trianda, although Lindos on the east coast was of importance as well. As several streams cross the plain of Trianda, much of the old settlement has probably been washed away, making the archaeological picture fairly lacunose.¹⁸¹ The lack of LH IIIA2 and later material, probably a result of the above-mentioned fluvial erosion, has led some scholars to assume that Trianda was abandoned after LH IIIA1.¹⁸² Excavations at Ialysos, the cemetery of Trianda, point however towards continued habitation.¹⁸³ The chamber tombs at Ialysos are wealthier than the ones at any other cemetery known thus far in the Dodecanese, suggesting Trianda was an important centre.¹⁸⁴

Nonetheless, Mee noted that compared to LH IIIA, a period in which a great quantity of pottery was imported from the Peloponnese,¹⁸⁵ LH IIIB was a period of decline, at Ialysos even more than elsewhere on the island.¹⁸⁶ The culture of Rhodes as a whole during LH IIIB appears to have been uniform.¹⁸⁷ In fact, LH IIIB saw the rise of the so-called East Aegean — West Anatolian Interface *koinè*, which spread from Rhodes in the south to Chios in the north.¹⁸⁸ This has led Mountjoy to consider the Dodecanese and especially Rhodes as the kingdom of Ahhiyawa. Cultural unity does not however necessarily mean political unity. In addition there is the problem that this *koinè* grew more prominent towards the end of LH IIIB and flourished as late as LH IIIC, at a time when the Mycenaean palaces were in ashes. It appears that while Ahhiyawa in the Hittite texts grows increasingly important during LH IIIB, culminating in the attribution of the title Great King to its chief during the reign of Hattušili III, the island of Rhodes and especially its major settlement experienced a period of relative decline. Therefore, Mountjoy's hypothesis seems implausible.

¹⁷⁷ Edel 1966, 54; Latacz 2001b, 161ff.

¹⁷⁸ Discussion in Wachsmann 1987.

¹⁷⁹ Page 1959, 15.

¹⁸⁰ Deger-Jalkotzy 1998, 106.

¹⁸¹ Benzi 1988, 53-54.

¹⁸² Furumark 1950, 150.

¹⁸³ Marketou 1988, 31.

¹⁸⁴ Mountjoy 1998, 51.

¹⁸⁵ Mee 1982, 86.

¹⁸⁶ Mee 1982, 87.

¹⁸⁷ Mee 1982, 88.

¹⁸⁸ Mountjoy 1998, 51.

Twenty-two *orientalia* listed by Lambrou-Phillipson were found at Ialysos.¹⁸⁹ All of these are from tombs and were found either in a LH IIIA or LH IIIC context. Five Egyptian scarabs, three cylinder seals, a mortar from Syro-Palestine, and one seal from Anatolia were found. The majority of finds was however of Cypriote origin: one cylinder seal, seven vessels, one mortar, one rapier, one mirror and one arrowhead were found. This is of little surprise because of the relative proximity of Rhodes to Cyprus. On the other hand, only a single find of Anatolian origin has been recorded, which is remarkable considering the proximity of the island to the Anatolian coast. One scarab was found in a possible LH IIIB context and another one in an LH IIIB-C context.¹⁹⁰ This would substantiate the idea proposed by Mee of a decline during LH IIIB.

Despite the at first glance impressive amount of *orientalia* at Ialysos, contacts between Rhodes and the East seem to have been limited to the LH IIIA and LH IIIC period. During this time, contact with Cyprus was strongest, while Egypt and the Levant only occasionally stood in contact with Rhodes. It is clear that contact with the Peloponnese was closer than the limited contact with the East. This is not the thing one would expect at the capital of Ahhiyawa. Furthermore, the period of decline at Ialysos coincides with a period of increasing Ahhiyawan activity in Anatolia. Above all, no monumental architecture has been found at Trianda or its necropolis. Rhodes and its major centre Trianda therefore cannot have been the heart of Ahhiyawa.

8. *The capital of Ahhiyawa*

From the above it is clear that although several palatial centres exercised at least some regional rule, only few could possibly bow on more than that. Mycenae, Thebes, and Orchomenos in this respect might qualify as the central place of Ahhiyawa according to the characteristics as put forward in Section 5. There are, however, some objections against Thebes and Orchomenos.

Orchomenos as Ahhiyawa

It is clear that Orchomenos was an important palatial centre during the Late Bronze Age. Its power is reflected in the so-called Treasury of Minyas and may also be deduced from the frescoes in the buildings that have been uncovered. As the archaeological picture at this site is inconclusive, some reservations have to be made when judging as to the site's fortunes during the 13th century. From that what is known, however, it seems that halfway the century Orchomenos met with a setback, indicated by a destruction layer. Although it does not necessarily relate to the importance of Orchomenos after this destruction, the pottery dated to LH IIIB2 and onwards is of relatively poor quality. This decline has been associated with the legendary attack on Orchomenos by Theban forces and the subsequent flooding of the Kopai basin.¹⁹¹ Whether this legend is true or not, the destruction at circa 1250 BC makes Orchomenos unlikely to have been the capital of Ahhiyawa, as precisely at this time the king of Ahhiyawa is addressed as a Great King. Moreover, its geographical position makes Orchomenos an unlikely naval power.

¹⁸⁹ Lambrou-Phillipson 1990, 385.

¹⁹⁰ Jacopi 1930-1931, 289, 256.

¹⁹¹ Demakopoulou/Konsola 1981, 12.

Thebes as Ahhiyawa

Thebes was destroyed around 1250 BC too, which makes this city a priori a less attractive candidate, as I have difficulties believing in a Greek Great King who is happily exercising his control over Miletus and writing his Hittite colleague concerning affairs far from home, while his palace is (partially) burning. The fact that habitation continued after the 1250 destruction may be considered as a sign of Theban vitality. It is however far from clear whether *palatial* life continued at all, and the point remains that a destruction of the palace — whatever its exact extent — would not fit a capital at the height of its power.

On the other hand, the size of the Kadmeia may be seen as evidence in favour of Theban candidacy as the capital of Ahhiyawa. The length of the hypothetical fortification wall is unsurpassed — except for Gla — and clearly testifies to the importance of Thebes in Late Bronze Age Greece. The wall protected not only the palace area, but also the dwellings of the citizens — a unique feature in Late Bronze Age Greece. The proximity of Gla in this respect is interesting, as this is the only centre that surpasses the walls of Thebes in length. Gla has however been proven not to be palatial and possibly was a subsidiary centre to Orchomenos.¹⁹² The fact that two centres close to each other were fortified *entirely* with a wall suggests that these fortifications were not built as a display of power of the ruling elite, but out of necessity. The destructions at Orchomenos and Thebes have been dated circa 1250 BC, while Gla seems to have been destroyed during early LH IIIB.¹⁹³ Unlike the other centres, Gla was never inhabited again. Thus, we have the erection of walls of great size at two sites close to each other, while on the other hand we have roughly parallel destructions at several sites in the region. An earthquake has been suggested as the principal cause of the destructions, but then it would be strange to find the Boeotians building enormous fortifications against earthquakes. It all seems to point towards a political threat: Boeotia was chronically instable during the 13th century.

The absence of monumental architecture at Thebes is vexing, as the sheer size of the settlement and the presumed length of the fortification would indicate at least the capability to construct monumental buildings similar to the ones at Tiryns and Mycenae. Much of it may have been destroyed by later occupation. On the other hand, Mycenae was inhabited until the Classical period too and Argos for an even longer period of time. And there, we do have remains of monumental architecture. Even at Athens, remains of a *tholos* have been found. At Thebes, however, no massive lintels or traces of *tholoi* were discovered, while elsewhere precisely the occurrence of *tholoi* and the presence of cyclopic architecture is considered to be evidence for royal power and prestige. The cemeteries of Thebes have yielded no evidence for *tholoi*, although a (double) chamber tomb with painted doorjambs is generally considered as royal. Although this does not exclude the possibility that once there were monuments comparable to Mycenae and the other major centres, the absence of remains of these features suggests that Thebes was not the capital of Ahhiyawa.

¹⁹² Iakovidis 2001, 149.

¹⁹³ Iakovidis 2001, 156.

Mycenae as Ahhiyawa

Mycenae without a doubt is the most impressive citadel of Late Bronze Age Greece. Although the length of the citadel wall cannot compare to the walls of Thebes or Gla, it remains an impressive fortification. The importance of the site is stressed by the Lions Gate. Furthermore, the bastion flanking this gate as well as the north gate and a section of the north-east wall that projects like a tower, is built in a pseudo-ashlar style using carefully dressed conglomerate stones.¹⁹⁴ Although a defensive purpose for the citadel walls and the Lions Gate cannot be denied, it is clear that the walls primarily served as a marker of the power of the ruling elite. As such, the sculpture in the Lion Gate is thought to be the emblem of the ruling family.

This family, and above all the *wanax*, resided in the palace on the summit of the citadel. The area covered by the palace is about 1.1 hectare. This roughly compares to the size of the palace of Tiryns, but dwindles when compared to the New Kadmeion at Thebes. As mentioned above, many of the other buildings on the citadel, i.e. the "granary", can be regarded as part of the palace; buildings serving a similar purpose of storage/guardhouse are considered part of the palaces at Pylos and at Thebes. This also goes for the elaborate approach to the palace, characterized by many turns and at least one monumental staircase. This feature certainly served to ensure a maximum effect on the approaching visitor of the palace. Although at Mycenae the palace proper dwindles in size compared to the New Kadmeion, it stands the comparison when its subsidiary buildings are taken into account. It should be noted that as yet, the *megaron* at Mycenae is the largest one known in Mycenaean Greece. The differences in size between the *megara* of the palatial centres nevertheless are very small and one should probably not attribute too much value to it. The total size of the settlements including palaces and citadels is however something else. The differences in size between the various palatial centres are considerable and there can be no doubt that Mycenae — with respect to population and overall size — was the major centre of Late Bronze Age Greece (see Fig. 6).

The *tholoi* near Mycenae, particularly those known as the Treasury of Atreus and the Tomb of Clytemnestra, served the same purpose as did the walls. They demonstrated the might of the ruling class. Unlike other sites in the Argolid, *tholoi* occur at Mycenae until well in the 13th century BC, culminating in the construction of the two *tholoi* noted above. The Treasury of Atreus displays similarities not only to the Lions Gate, but also to the Treasury of Minyas at Orchomenos, so much so that it has been suggested that they were the work of the same architect.

Apart from its fortifications, the Lions Gate, and the *tholoi*, Mycenae possesses another fairly unique feature. The cultic area at Mycenae seems to have been constructed during LH IIIB. It clearly served a religious purpose, indicated by the presence of such features as a slaughtering stone, hearths, a libation hole, and several frescoes apparently depicting deities. The complex was modified several times, i.e. after a presumed earthquake shortly after the middle of LH IIIB and after the fiery destruction at the end of that period.¹⁹⁵ It remained a religious area until LH IIIC — after the fall of the palace — although the area eventually went

¹⁹⁴ Iakovidis 1983, 24.

¹⁹⁵ Iakovidis 1983, 47.

into disuse.¹⁹⁶ Though I know of the libation hole next to the seat of the *wanax* at Pylos and the newly found altar at Dimini, I am not aware of a similar complex at other centres.

Several destructions outside the citadel seem to indicate that the palace area was fortified not only as a display of power. The so-called House of the Oil Merchant was destroyed during late LH IIIB2. Wace postulated that it was destroyed by human activity and suggested that the vases stored with olive oil that were found inside, had been smashed deliberately to fuel the flames.¹⁹⁷ Later excavations yielded however evidence for a destruction as a result of an earthquake, of which displaced walls are the clearest testimony.¹⁹⁸

A substantial number of *orientalia* were found at Mycenae. These were found not only in the citadel, but also outside the walls, in the area of the House of the Oil Merchant and in the tombs. The finds within the citadel walls are of special interest, as these include the well known faience plaques of Amenhotep III (1391-1353 BC). Although these were found in the cultic centre — an area dated LH IIIB — and therefore were deposited at least half a century after their manufacture, there can be little doubt that these were brought to Mycenae in an official manner, i.e. by means of a diplomatic envoy. In favour of this interpretation speaks the exclusive royal connotation of these objects in the Levant.¹⁹⁹ I already noted above that the ritual connotation at Mycenae is rather similar to the use of these objects in their own cultural setting (e.g. in a foundation deposit under a temple). As similar plaques in Egypt have been found adorning windowsills or doorposts as well, Helck proposed that the plaques originally adorned an "ägyptisches Zimmer" on the Mycenaean citadel.²⁰⁰ Whatever the case, the fact remains that the *aegyptiaca* on the citadel suggest direct and intentional contact between the Mycenaean court and the pharaoh of Egypt during the reign of Amenhotep III. I will deal with this further below.

Judging the amount, the *orientalia* at Mycenae indicate that Egypt was Mycenae's strongest link with the East. As noted above however, Cyprus and the Levant must have stood in contact with Mycenae as well, as several objects from these regions were found. Anatolian and Mesopotamian goods were found mostly in early Mycenaean context (LH II), but are scarce. It is unlikely that during this early period the oriental goods came to Mycenae directly; a Minoan link seems plausible. The virtual absence of goods from these regions at Mycenae (and other centres) is vexing, particularly since we know that direct contact must have existed between Ahhiyawa and Assyria (see the Šaušgamuwa treaty) and certainly with Anatolia. One could imagine these goods to have been of perishable nature (I recall that during the Old Assyrian period precious robes and garments were important trading goods) but admittedly, the lack of archaeological evidence remains something of a flaw when envisioning a powerful kingdom of Mycenae with widespread contacts.

Conclusion

Thus, both Mycenae and Thebes make a case as capital of Ahhiyawa, although Mycenae seems to have the better cards. At both centres the lack of Anatolian imports is problematic, but can be set aside for reasons noted above. As Ahhiyawa is attested in Hittite sources only,

¹⁹⁶ Iakovidis 1983, 48.

¹⁹⁷ Wace 1954, 243.

¹⁹⁸ Mylonas 1983, 146.

¹⁹⁹ Hayes 1953, Fig. 232; Helck 1995, 80.

²⁰⁰ Helck 1995, 80.

the occurrence of *orientalia* from regions other than Anatolia does at first glance not directly relate to the plausibility of a centre as Ahhiyawan capital. It does however relate to the position of the centre in interstate/interregional trade and exchange, as has been noted above. In this respect, it is clear that both Mycenae and Thebes were the major centres of the Late Bronze Age Aegean.

However, the destructions in Boeotia during the 13th century are in my view incompatible with the core-area of a Great Kingdom and the impressive if rather hypothetical defensive circuit protecting the whole of the settlement only seems to stress the insecure and instable nature of the region. Note in this respect that Millawanda/Miletus, the only Mycenaean centre whose history is known through Hittite texts rather than by archaeological evidence, was only fortified in its entirety *after* military clashes with the Hittites. Previously, it seems to have lacked significant defensive architecture.

In addition, the Kom el Hetan list indicates that to the Egyptians, Mycenae was part of the kingdom of Tanaju. Indeed, it seems to have been regarded as its capital, whereas Thebes is not named as a centre but as a region. If we were to accept the identification of Messenia, Kythera, Elis, and the Thebaid in the Kom el Hetan text, then Thebes should be dismissed as the leading centre in Greece. In fact, this would leave us no option but to equate Tanaju with Ahhiyawa and Ahhiyawa with the Kingdom of Mycenae. The question remains whether we are willing to base so much upon a single text.

8. The extent of the kingdom of Mycenae

It appears from the Kom el Hetan list, where most of Tanaju is composed of regions rather than centres, that the kingdom of Mycenae was a conglomerate of regional entities. Only Mycenae itself and Nauplion are mentioned as centres, which seems to point to their prominence as the main focus of Egyptian interest. It is of importance to verify the implications of the Kom el Hetan list. Again, the archaeological record is the principal source of information.

Mycenae is situated in the northern part of the Argolid. Its direct surrounding is a small valley, widening towards the plain of Argos. The centre controlled several routes running from the nearby centre of Berbati to the north and to the Argolid. Its dominance during the Mycenaean period is commonly thought to have extended over two important areas: the Argolid and Korinthia. Mycenaean dominance over the latter has been argued for on the basis of survey results.²⁰¹ The major point in this respect was the lack of significant centres in Korinthia, as well as the absence of *tholoi*. As *tholoi* are considered to have been the markers of the (local) elite, the absence of these monumental tombs indicates that power was centred somewhere else. That this power was able to undertake significant projects is illustrated with the drainage of the Nemea valley — originally a swamp. As Mycenae is the closest centre to Korinthia, it is reasonable to assume that the ruler of that centre exercised control over Korinthia. A road connecting Korinthia with Mycenae adds to this impression.²⁰²

The Argolid saw the rise of several palatial centres. Tiryns, Midea, and Mycenae were most notable, but there are some arguments to think of fortified centres at Nauplion and Argos too.

²⁰¹ Cherry/Davis 2001, 154-156.

²⁰² Mylonas 1966, 86.

Whereas in the Kom el Hetan list Tiryns is omitted, possibly indicating its independence, it is clear that the Argolid must have been united during the 13th century BC. Although the palace of Tiryns was functioning until the end of that century, there are only two rather unimpressive *tholoi*.²⁰³ These are dated to the second half of the 13th century. Had Tiryns been an independent seat of power, one would have expected its royalty to be buried in monumental *tholoi* near the palace. As *tholoi* from an early period are lacking while those dated to the late 13th century are conspicuously less impressive than the tombs at Mycenae, it appears that Tiryns fell to Mycenae during that century. I have noted that the palace of Tiryns was still functioning during this period and indeed, at Tiryns too a display of power can be observed with the final rebuilding of the citadel. However, the lack of monumental tombs comparable to those at Mycenae points towards its dependency on that city. One might consider Tiryns as a dependent subcentre, possibly ruled by a branch of the royal house of Mycenae. As it was the major port of the Argolid and the gate of Mycenae to other regions,²⁰⁴ one could see the point of fortifying its citadel and embellishing its palace. The construction of *tholoi* near Tiryns in the second half of the 13th century along with the construction of the great *tholoi* at Mycenae marks the zenith of the power of Mycenae.

A system of roads and bridges throughout the plain of Argos radiating from Mycenae²⁰⁵ adds to the impression of Argive political unity. This system extends to the east, as a bridge at Kazarma (near Epidaurus) indicates. Thus, it is possible to reconstruct on archaeological grounds a kingdom of Mycenae encompassing Korinthia, the Argolid and the region around Epidaurus. At Isthmia (Korinthia) the remains of what tentatively has been identified as a defensive wall have been found.²⁰⁶ Broneer suggested that this wall was built to block the isthmus to prevent an invasion of the Peloponnese.²⁰⁷ In this respect, the road through Korinthia has been interpreted as facilitating the transport of chariots, which in combination with the erection of the wall, would suggest that the king of Mycenae perceived some kind of threat from the east.²⁰⁸ Although the wall was never finished, one might argue that it marked the eastern border of the kingdom of Mycenae.

Fortifications apart from the citadels are not attested elsewhere in Korinthia and in the Argolid. As a consequence, the extent of the kingdom of Mycenae towards the west and south remains unclear. One might think of links with Laconia and Messenia (as the Kom el Hetan text suggests). The road in the Kazarma-Neromilos area in Messenia, thought to have been part of a road running from Pylos to Kalamata,²⁰⁹ as well as the system of roads in Arcadia²¹⁰ may have been connected to the network of roads in the Argolid, which in turn may indicate that these areas were part of the kingdom. Thus, although apart from the Kom el Hetan list there is no clear evidence that these regions were once united, archaeology does prove that Mycenae ruled over a larger territory than any of the other known palatial centres.

²⁰³ Papademetriou 2001, 67-70.

²⁰⁴ See Maran 2003, 223.

²⁰⁵ Crouwel 1981, 17.

²⁰⁶ Gebhard/Hermans 1992, 6.

²⁰⁷ Broneer 1968, 35.

²⁰⁸ Crouwel 1981, 150.

²⁰⁹ Fant/Loy 1972, 27.

²¹⁰ Krigas 1987, 74-83.

9. Conclusion: The Mycenaean world

Above, I have demonstrated the following points concerning Ahhiyawa:

1. The heartland of Ahhiyawa must be situated either at Thebes or at Mycenae.
2. Ahhiyawa was of a significant threat to the Hittites in western Anatolia.
3. Ahhiyawa was active in Anatolia between 1400 BC and 1220 BC.
4. Ahhiyawan nobility was acquainted with Anatolian nobility.
5. Ahhiyawa comprised Millawanda, Lesbos, and several isles.
6. Ahhiyawa proper must be situated on the Greek mainland.

On the other hand we have the kingdom of Tanaju which:

1. Comprised the Argolid, Messenia, Kythera, probably the Thebaid and possibly Elis.
2. Had Mycenae as its principal centre.
3. Stood in diplomatic contact with Egypt.

Concerning the Mycenaean world in general the following points were made:

1. The Aegean was divided into several palatial centres.
2. These palatial centres in general exercised regional rule.
3. Only Mycenae exercised its rule over more than one region.
4. Thebes and Mycenae stood in contact with the Levant and Cyprus.
5. Mycenae upheld diplomatic contact with Egypt.

The geographical extent of Tanaju is approximately known from the Kom el Hetan list, although some of the identifications are debatable. With Tanaju covering most of the Peloponnese and probably the Thebaid, there is very little room left for other independent political entities in the Aegean. As Ahhiyawa was an important state, capable of pursuing its aims in Anatolia both politically and militarily, it is doubtful whether this entity would fit in the space left in the Aegean. It also implies an unlikely gap in both Hittite and Egyptian intelligence, as both of these kingdoms apparently were unaware of another important state in the Aegean. Apart from that, those centres that are plausible candidates as the capital of Ahhiyawa lay within the kingdom of Tanaju. It is therefore compelling to consider Ahhiyawa to be the same as the Tanaju land known from the Kom el Hetan list. As a consequence, the centre of Tanaju — the kingdom of Mycenae — must be regarded as the heartland of Ahhiyawa as well.

If the king of Mycenae really ruled over other kingdoms such as Pylian Messenia, this rule is not referred to in any Linear B text. On the other hand, if the local dynasties were kept in power (as was usually the case in the Near Eastern kingdoms), there would have been little reason to mention the overlord in administrative texts. In this respect, I cannot help being puzzled by the occurrence of the land of Atreus within the Pylian kingdom, which, if related to the legendary Argive king, would suggest a feudal system. But for now, it is best to ignore myth and legends and content ourselves with the equation Tanaju = Ahhiyawa = Mycenae: a Greek kingdom encompassing the larger part of the Peloponnese, the Thebaid, Kythera, several isles including Lesbos, and Miletus on the west coast of Anatolia (Fig. 8).

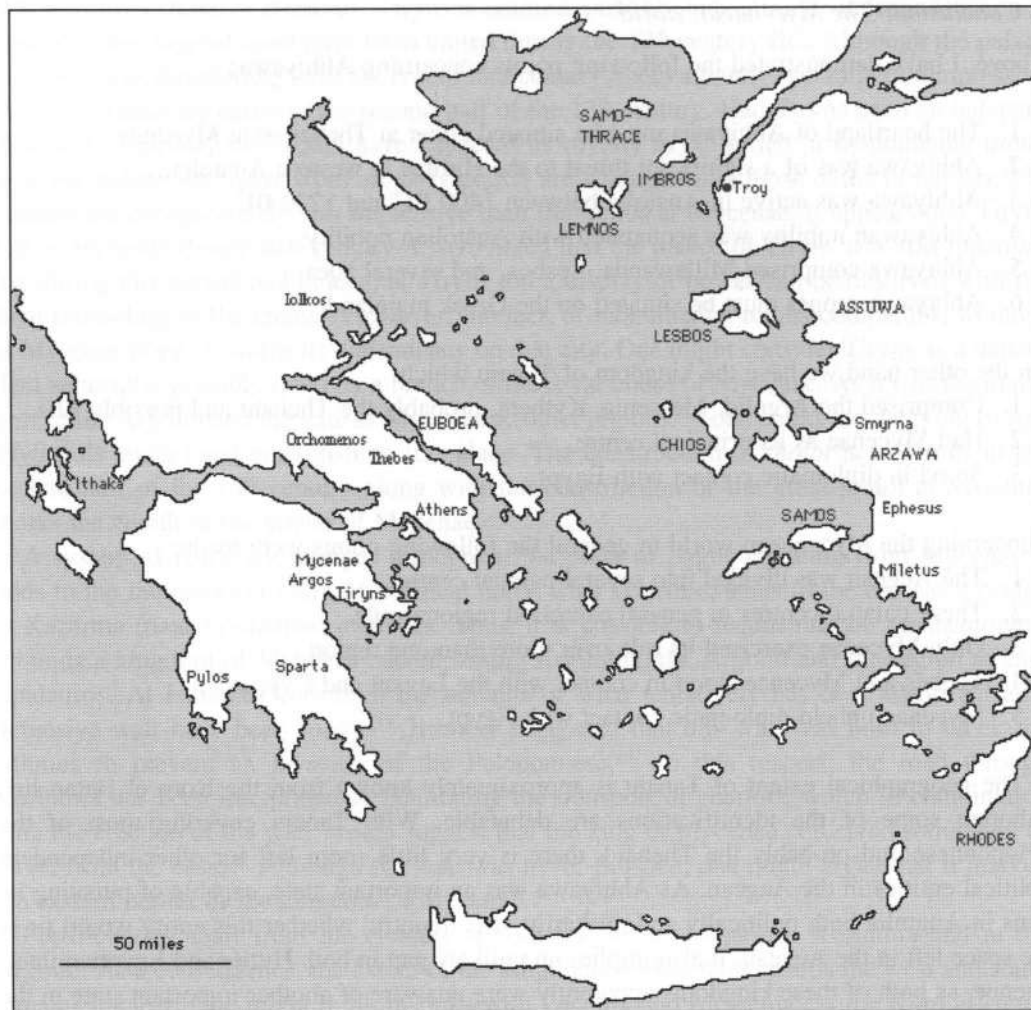


Fig. 1: The Aegean during the Late Bronze Age.

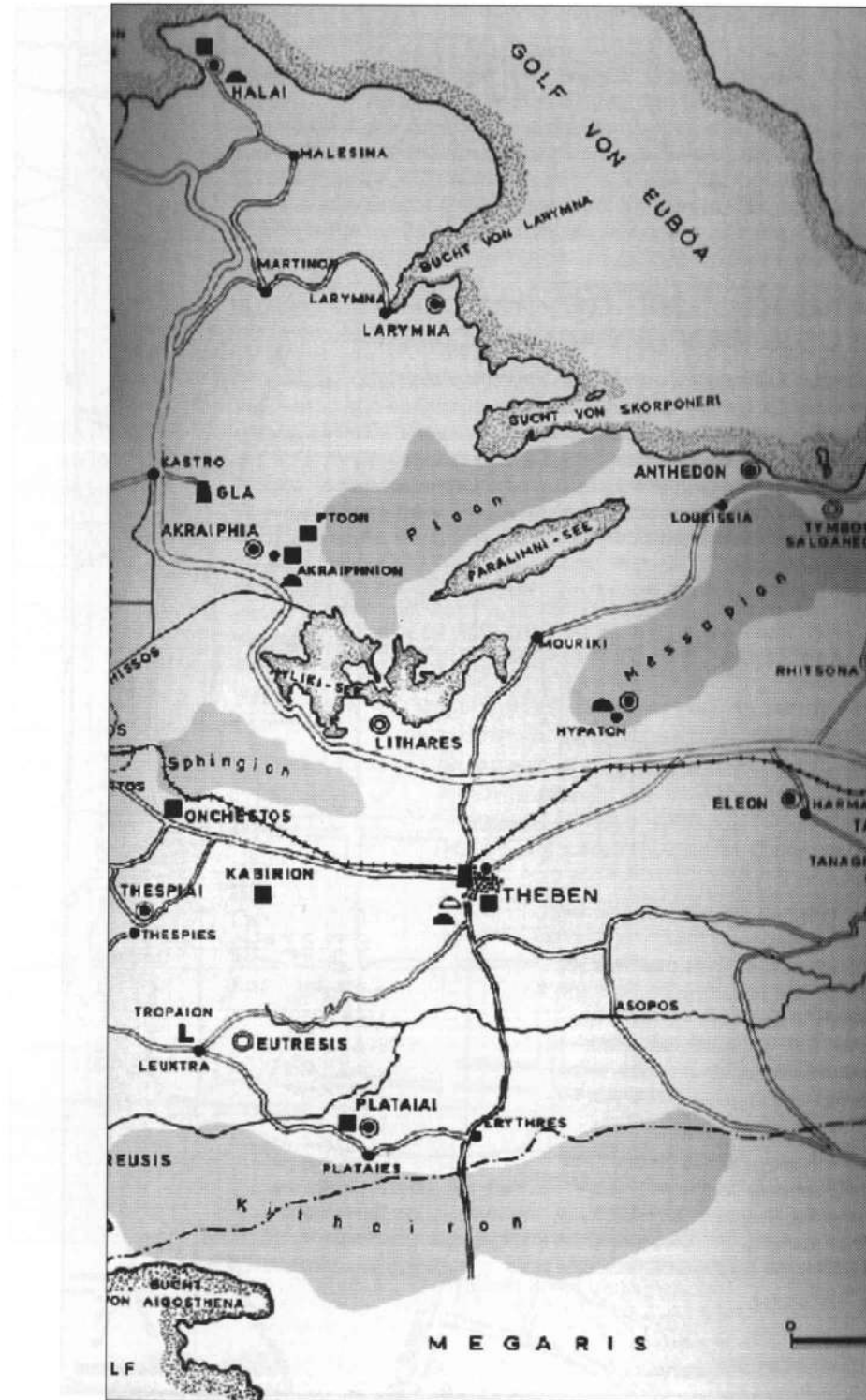


Fig. 2: Thebes and environs.

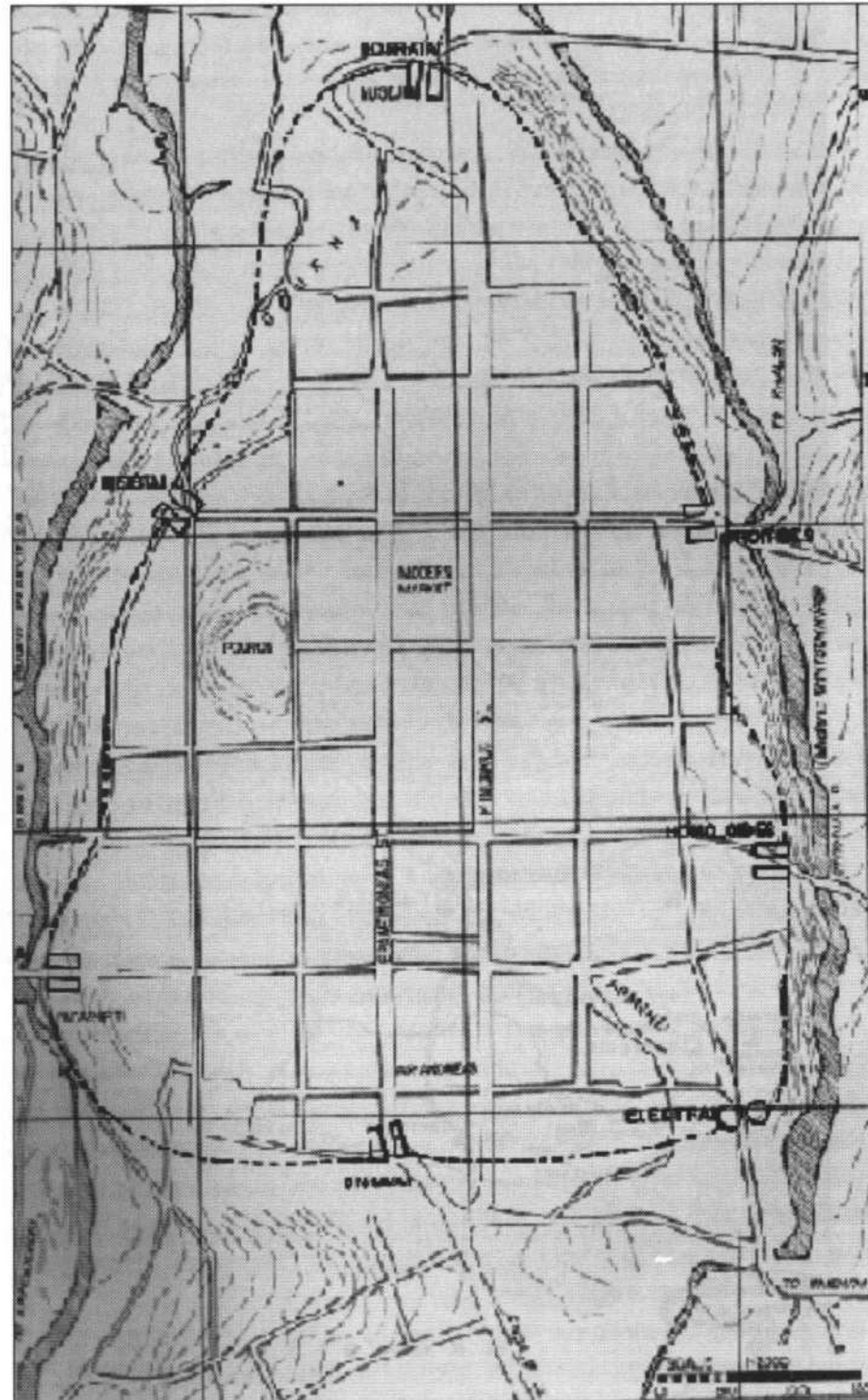


Fig. 3: The seven Theban gates as proposed by Keramopoulos.

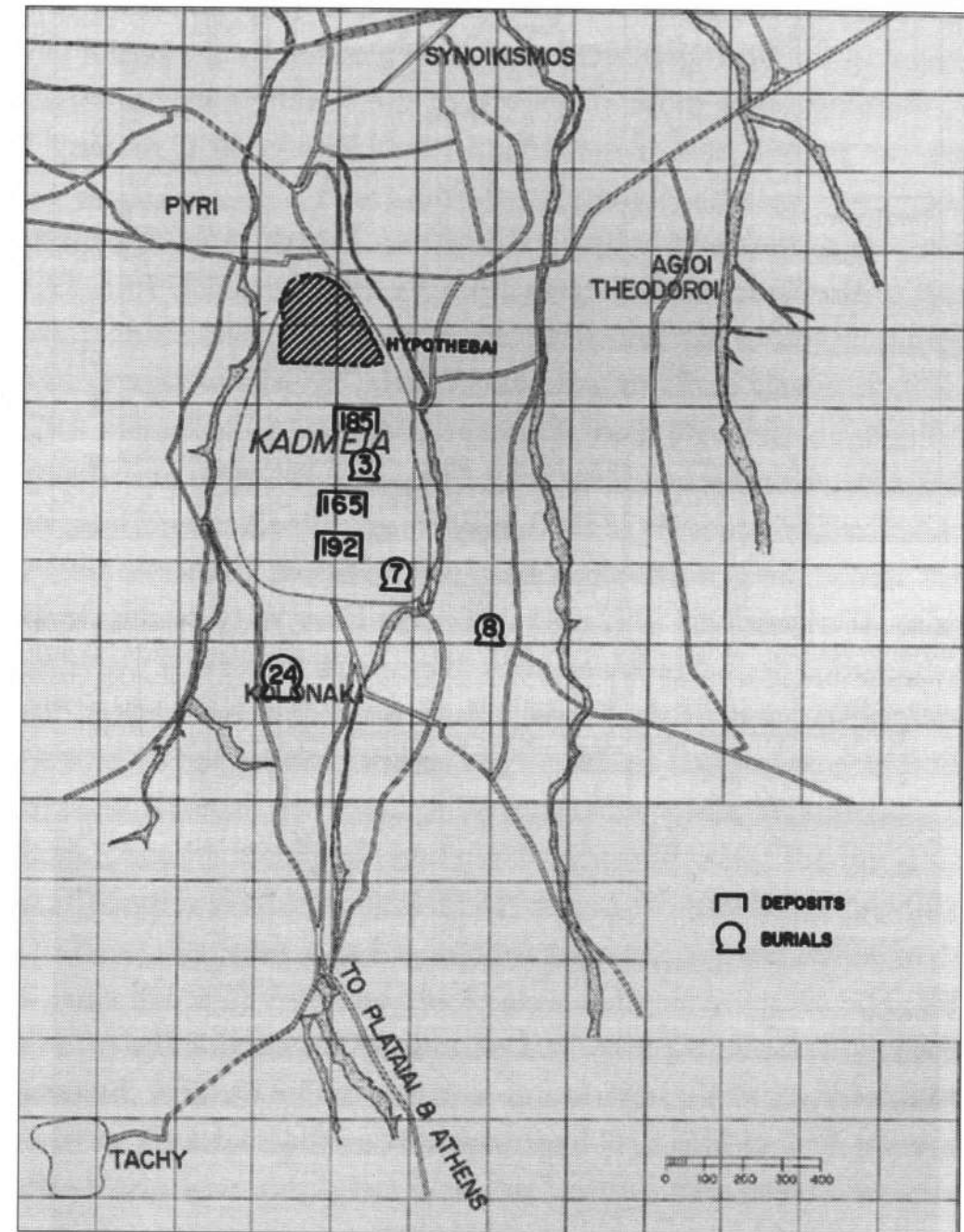


Fig. 4: The Theban lower town.

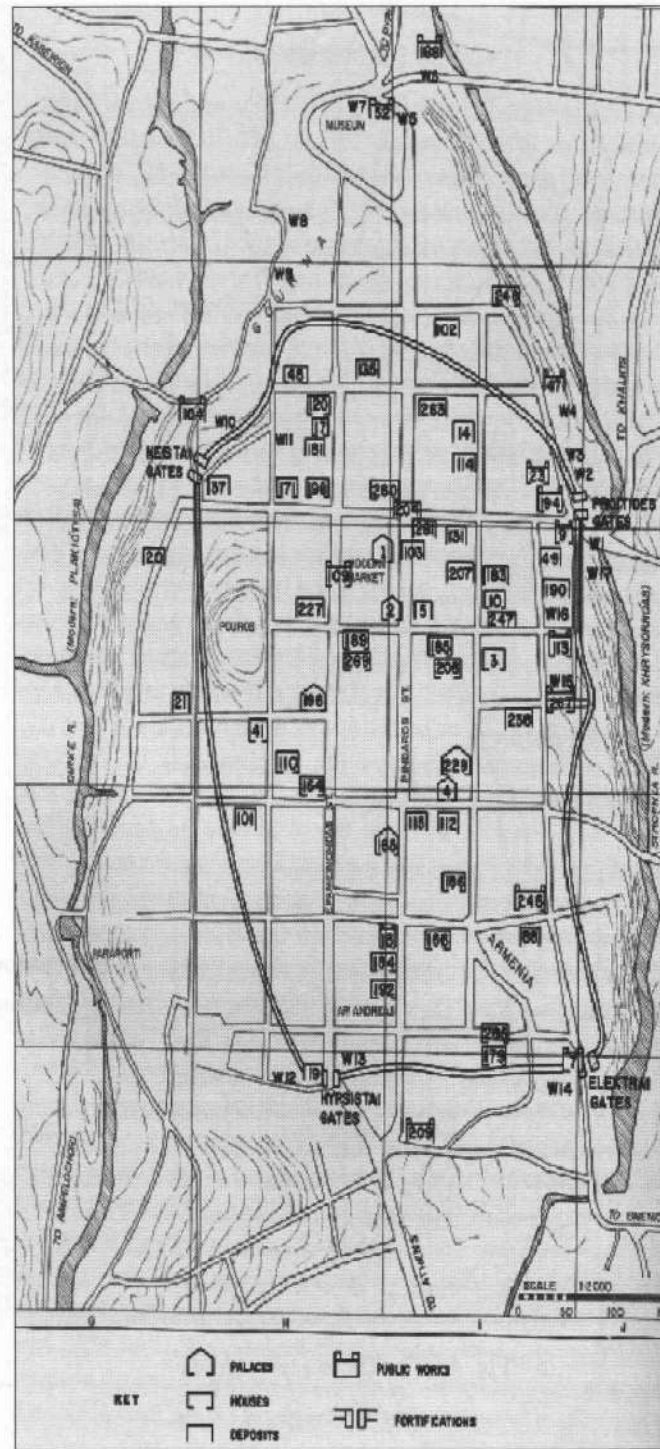


Fig. 5: Thebes in the LH period, 1600-1250 BC.

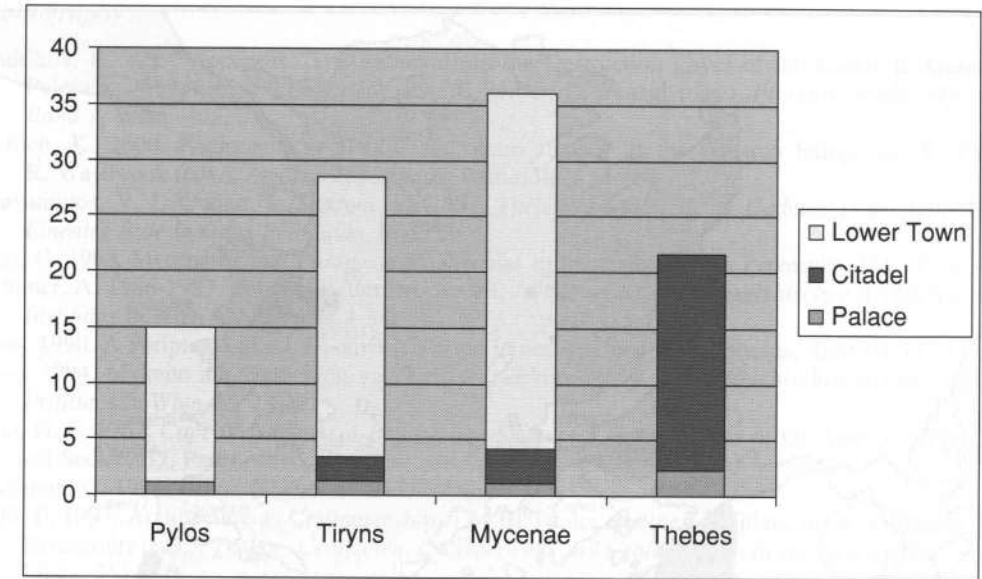


Fig. 6: Approximate size (in ha.) of the major palatial centres.

Note that no fortified citadel existed at Pylos, whereas most if not all of the buildings in the citadels of Tiryns and Mycenae could (perhaps should) be counted as palace subsidiaries. The citadel of Thebes is however not exclusively composed of palatial buildings, but includes the settlement itself. Note also that for the lower town of Tiryns, I took the LH III C extent, as earlier periods remain vaguely known (although LH III C seems to have known the largest extent of the Tirynthian lower town).



Fig. 7: Mycenaean bridge at Kazarma.

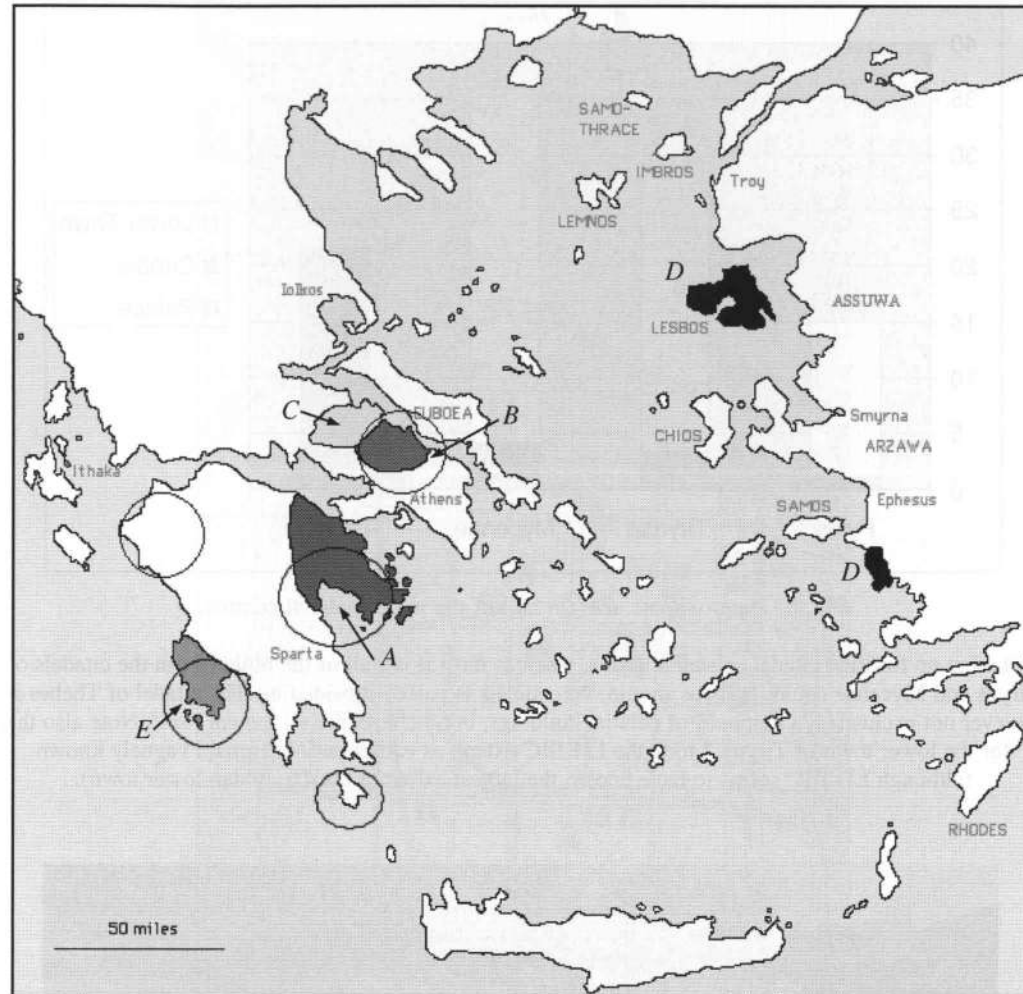


Fig. 8: Attested political entities.

A: Kingdom of Mycenae; B: Kingdom of Thebes; C: Kingdom of Orchomenos; D: Ahhiyawan overseas territories; E: Kingdom of Pylos; Encircled: Identified areas of the Tanaju land.

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