

MINOAN AND MYCENAEAN OVERSEA'S CONTACTS: THE EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

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Abstract: There are various ways to establish Minoan and Mycenaean oversea's contacts. One of them is archaeological, by tracing the distribution of Minoan and Mycenaean pottery outside the island of Crete and the Greek mainland, respectively. This approach has already developed in a discipline of its own. Yet another means, which is less commonly put into practice, may be called epigraphical. It on the one hand borders on archaeology insofar as it entails the distribution of Minoan Linear A inscriptions outside Crete (A) and on the other hand involves linguistics where reflexes of foreign toponyms in the onomastic material of the Linear B tablets from Knossos in Crete and Pylos, Mycenae, and Thebes in the Greek mainland come into play (B). This article will focus on the epigraphic evidence for Minoan and Mycenaean oversea's contacts.

Keywords: Linear A, Linear B, Trade, Late Bronze Age, Aegean.

Rezumat: Există diferite moduri de a stabili contactele dintre cultura minoică și cea miceniană și teritoriile continentale. O primă metodă este analiza arheologică a răspândirii ceramicii minoice și miceniene în afara insulei Creta și în afara teritoriului grecesc. Acest tip de abordare reprezintă dealtfel o disciplină de sine stătătoare. Un alt tip de investigație este cea epigrafică. Deși apropiată de arheologie în măsura în care se ocupă de răspândirea inscripțiilor cu alfabet linear A dincolo de insula Creta, acest tip de investigație presupune și un demers lingvistic privind raportul dintre toponimele și onomastica tabletelor cu alfabet linear B din Creta și din Micene și cele din Grecia continentală. Articolul de față se concentrează pe aspectele epigrafice ale legăturilor dintre cultura minoică și cea miceniană și teritoriile continentale.

Cuvinte cheie: Linear A, Linear B, Epoca târzie a Bronzului, Egean.

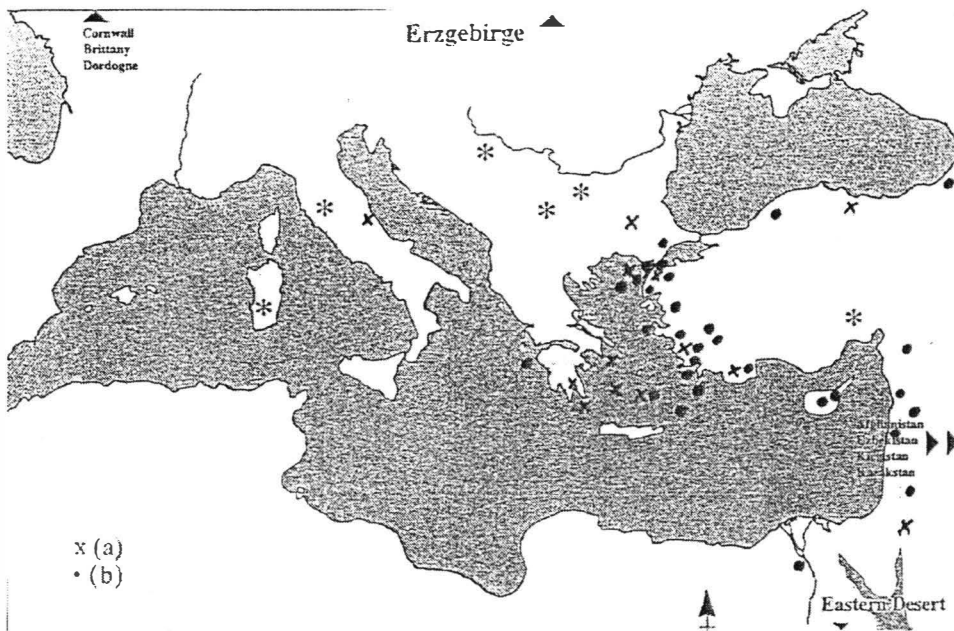
There are various ways to establish Minoan and Mycenaean oversea's contacts. One of them is archaeological, by tracing the distribution of Minoan and Mycenaean pottery outside the island of Crete and the Greek mainland, respectively. This approach has already developed in a discipline of its own. Yet another means, which is less commonly put into practice, may be called epigraphical. It on the one hand borders on archaeology insofar as it entails the distribution of Minoan Linear A inscriptions outside Crete (A) and on the other hand involves linguistics where reflexes of foreign toponyms in the onomastic material of the Linear B tablets from Knossos in Crete and Pylos, Mycenae, and Thebes in the Greek mainland come into play (B).

With respect to the distribution of Linear A inscriptions outside Crete, it deserves our attention that incidental finds are coming from the east, Tel Haror in the Negev (Oren 1996: 99, Fig. 1a),¹ as well as the west, Monte Morrone on the Adriatic side of Italy (Facchetti & Negri 2003: 188-91; Tav I), but in the main dispersal is focussed on the Aegean to the north up to Samothrace (SA Wc 1) and Troy (TRO Zg 1-2), not to mention Drama in Thrace (DRA Zg 1) and Amisos along the Pontine coast of Turkey (Bossert 1942: Abb. 6). Even though the archaeological find-context of these two latter inscriptions is either

¹ The most convincing connection with Linear A of this inscription is formed by L 60 *ni*, but it should be noted that a corresponding sign also features in the local Levantine Byblos script, datable to c. 1700 BC, namely B 13, cf. Woudhuizen *forthc.* 2.

problematic (transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age) or altogether lacking (surfaced on the market), respectively, it nonetheless can be confidently stated that the inscriptions in question date from the period of c. 1750-1350 BC, no Linear A inscription in Crete being found before the end of Middle Minoan II and after the transition from Late Minoan IIIA1 to IIIA2 (see Map I [a]).

Next, as far as reflexes of foreign toponyms in the Linear B tablets are concerned, it is conspicuous that the east is duly represented again by reference to Egypt (*ai-ku-pi-ti-jo*), various towns (*a-ra-da-jo* "Arwadian", *tu-ri-jo* "Tyrian") and regions (*su-ri-jo* "Syrian", *po-ni-ki-jo* "Phoenician", *ki-nu-qa* "Canaan")² in the Levant, and the island of Cyprus (*a-ra-si-jo* "Alasian", *ku-pi-ri-jo* "Kuprios"), but that no such references to sites or regions in the west can be detected. Whatever the extent of this latter observation, what primarily concerns us here is that in like manner as with the distribution of Linear A inscriptions the overall majority of the cases has a bearing on sites in the Aegean region to the north of Crete and the east of the Greek mainland, with a noted concentration in the north Aegean (*i-mi-ri-jo* "Imbrian", *ra-mi-ni-jo* "Lemnios" and *ra-mi-ni-ja* "Lemnians (f)"), the Troad (*si-mi-te-u* "Smintheus", *to-ro* "Tros" and *to-ro-ja* "Trojan (f)"), Thracian Khersonesos (*ku-pa-si-ja* "Kupasian (f)"), Hellespont (*ra-pa-sa-ko* "Lampsakians" and *ra-pa-sa-ko-jo* "of Lampsakos (G sg.)"), Propontis (*pe-ri-te-u* "Perintheus"), while even extending into the Black Sea area all the way up to Kolchis in the eastern extremity of its southern coast (*pa-pa-ra-ko* "Paphlagon", *ko-ki-da* "Kolkhidas" and *ko-ki-de-ja* "Kolkhidecios")³ (see Map I [b]). As far as their dating is concerned, these tablets belong to the period of c. 1350 BC to c. 1200 BC, i.e. from the Late Minoan IIIA1/2 transitional period to the end of Late Helladic IIIB.



Map I. (a) Distribution of Linear A inscriptions found outside Crete; (b) Linear B forms related to toponyms located outside Crete and the Greek mainland (including Euboea); note that the remaining *legenda* refer to locations with tin-deposits presumably mined already in Antiquity.

Now, it seems unlikely to assume that the correspondence in the distribution of Linear A inscriptions outside Crete on the one hand and that of reflexes of foreign toponyms in the Linear B tablets on the other hand is due to mere chance. Therefore, we appear to have a pattern here, indicating Minoan and Mycenaean interest in the north-Aegean region, in particular that part giving access to the Black Sea. This interest, then, was no doubt for commercial reasons, the routes to Thrace and the Black Sea

² Woudhuizen 1992: 46.

³ For *Qulha* "Kolchis" as a reference to the region east of Trabzon near Batum in an Urartian text of Sarduri II (756-c. 730 BC), see Salvini 1995: 66-67; cf. maps 1-2 of pp. 242-245.

providing the Minoans and Mycenaeans with access to raw materials, most important of which were rare but indispensable metals, especially tin. However, as no Mycenaean, let alone Minoan, pottery has been found in the Black Sea area, trade contacts with for example the region of Kolkhis may have been *indirect*, through the medium of the Trojans or some other population group living in the north Aegean or along the southern Pontic littoral.⁴ As a parallel it may be pointed out in this connection that in the Early Iron Age the tin traded by the Phoenicians originated from the Cassiterides (= Scilly islands), but no Phoenician material has been found in these islands, because this trade was indirect, the Phoenicians shipping on Tartessos (= modern Huelva), the Tartessians shipping on Oestrymnia in Bretagne, and the Oestrymnians finally shipping on the Cassiterides.⁵

As a kind of by-product of our present investigation, it seems worth noting, finally, that the observed focus of Minoan and Mycenaean attention on the north-Aegean region allows us to decide the long-standing discussion about the identity of *w-iw:-r-y-l̄* in the list of Aegean place names of Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC) from his temple-tomb at Kom el-Hetan in favor of *Wilios* or Troy (see Map II).

(a) Distribution of Linear A inscriptions found outside Crete

1. Monte Morrone, Sulmona (Facchetti & Negri 2003: Tav. I)
2. Ayos Stephanos (HS Zg 1)
3. Kythera (KY Zg 1; Za 2)
4. Kea (KE 1; Wc 2; Zb 3-5)
5. Melos (MI Zb 1; 2)
6. Thera (THE Zb 1-4)
7. Samothrace (SA Wc 1)
8. Drama (DRA Zg 1)
9. Troy (TRO Zg 1-2)
10. Miletos (MIL Zb 1)
11. Lycia (Meriggi)⁶⁶
12. Amisos (Bossert 1942: Abb. 6)
13. Tel Haror (Oren 1996: 99, Fig. 1a)

Sources: Godart & Olivier 1976-85; Niemeier 1996 (Miletos); 99 Fig. 3 (overview); Godart 1994 and Faure 1996 (Troy); Oren 1996: 99, Fig. 1a (Tel Haror); Facchetti 2002: 138 (Samothrace); Facchetti & Negri 2003: 188-191; Tav. I (Monte Morrone); Bossert 1942: Abb. 6 (Eski Samsun = Amisos); Meriggi (Lycia); cf. Woudhuizen 2006: 35; Fig. 8.

(b) Linear B forms related to toponyms located outside Crete and the Greek mainland (including Euboa)

Linear B form	tablet	
1. <i>za-ku-si-ja</i>	PY Sa 787	“Zakynthian (f)”
<i>za-ku-si-jo</i>	MY Oe 122	“Zakunsios”
2. <i>qe-ra-jo</i>	KN Vc 5523	“Thēraios”

⁴ Note that Latacz 1988 maintains that these contacts are also reflected in the archaeological record in the form of, for instance, imitations of Mycenaean and Trojan pottery reported for Georgia.

⁵ Schulten 1922.

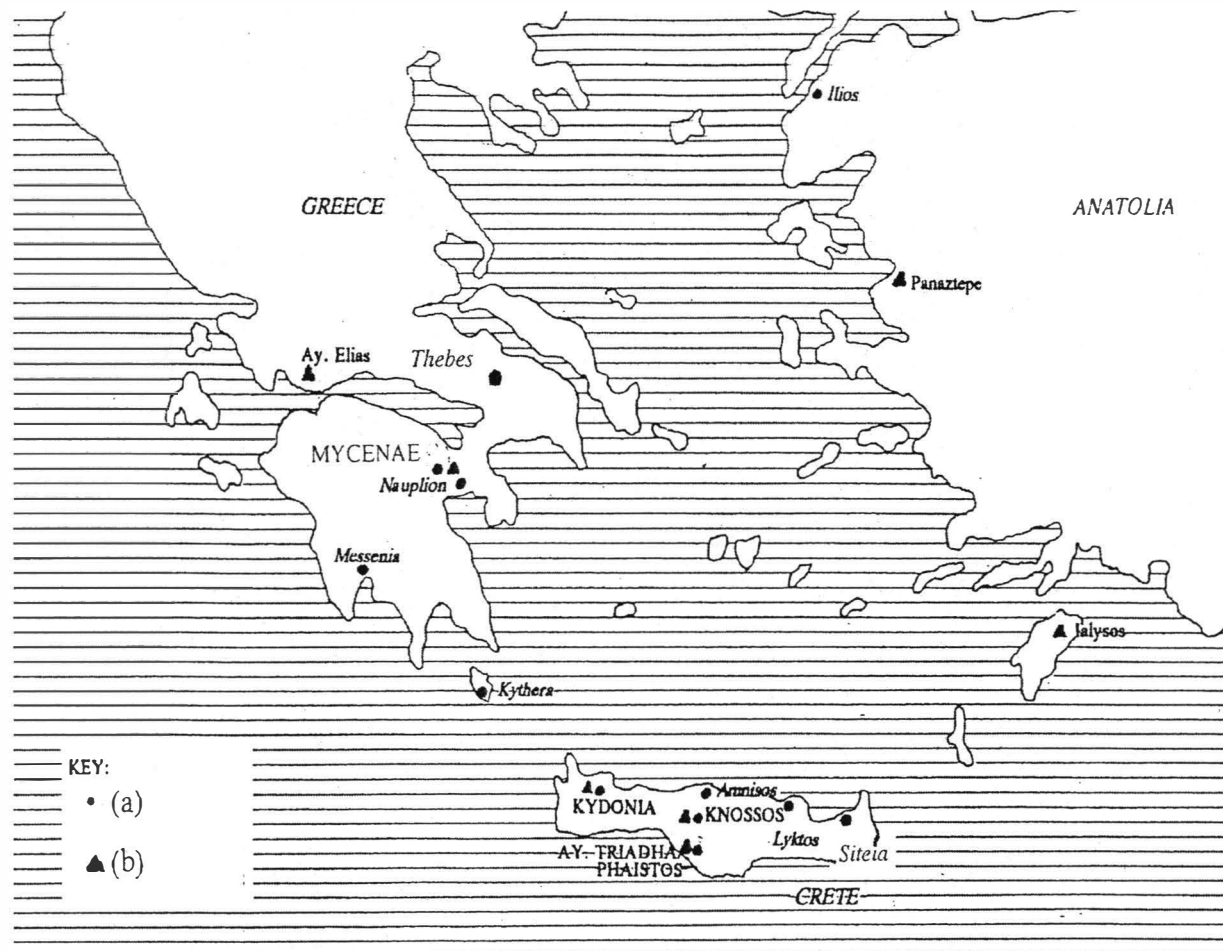
⁶ The Lycian evidence, referred to in a note by Meriggi which unfortunately I cannot trace back, consists of the attestation of only one sign in form of a spoked wheel, which in terms of Cretan Linear A means L 29 *ka*. Admittedly, this particular sign may alternatively come into consideration as an instance of Luwian hieroglyphic *290 *ka-r(a/i)* without to “thorn” *383.2 + *r(a/i)*. Notwithstanding this fact, its Cretan Linear antecedents appear to receive further emphasis from the fact that signs of Cretan Linear origin like, for instance, the double-axe L 52 *a*, can be found in the later Lycian alphabet, in the given case for secondary *e* (= *ē*) whereas such an observation does not apply to the Luwian hieroglyphic option.

3.	<i>ra-mi-ni-ja</i>	PY Ab 186	“Lāmniai (< Lamnos = Lemnos)”
	<i>ra-mi-ni-jo</i>	PY An 209, etc.	“Lāmnios”
4.	<i>i-mi-ri-jo</i>	KN Db 1186	“Imbrian”
5.	<i>ku-pa-si-ja</i>	KN V 1043	“Kupasian (f)”
6.	<i>ki-si-wi-ja</i>	PY Aa 770	“Khian (f)”
	<i>ki-si-wi-jo</i>	KN V 60	“Khian”
7.	<i>to-ro</i>	KN Dc 5687	“Trōs (cf. Hit. <i>Tarwiša</i>)”
	<i>to-ro-ja</i>	PY Ep 705	“Trōjā (f)”
8.	<i>si-mi-te-u</i>	KN Am 827, etc.	“Smintheus”
9.	<i>ra-pa-sa-ko</i>	PY Cn 131	“Lampsakōi”
10.	<i>pe-ri-te-u</i>	KN B 5025, C 954, PY An 654	“Perintheus”
11.	<i>ka-pa-ti-ja</i>	PY Eb 338, etc.	“Karpathiā (f)”
12.	<i>ma-sa (-de)</i>	KN X 744	“(from) Masa (= Mysia)”
13.	<i>a-pa-si-jo</i>	PY As 767	“Ephesian (< Hit. <i>Apaša</i> = Ephesos)”
14.	<i>mi-ra-ti-ja</i>	PY Aa 798, etc.	“Milātiai (cf. Hit. <i>Milawanda</i>)”
	<i>mi-ra-ti-jo</i>	TH Fq 177, etc.	“Milesian”
15.	<i>ze-pu₂-ra₃</i>	PY Aa 61	“Zephurai (< <i>Zephuriā</i> = Halikarnassos)”
	<i>ze-pu₂-ro</i>	PY Ea 56	“Zephuros”
16.	<i>ki-ni-di-ja</i>	PY Aa 792, etc.	“Knidiai”
17.	<i>wo-di-jo</i>	KN V 60, etc.	“Wordios (< * <i>Wordos</i> = Rhodos)”
18.	<i>ru-ki-jo</i>	PY Gn 720, etc.	“Lycian”
19.	<i>a-si-wi-ja</i> or <i>a-swi-ja</i>	PY Fr 1206, etc.	“Aswiāi (Asians (f) ≈ Lydians, cf. Hit. <i>Aššūwa</i> and Eg. <i>’Isy</i>)” ⁷⁷
	<i>a-si-wi-jo</i> or <i>a-swi-jo</i>	KN Df 1469, etc.	“Aswios (> Asios, see remarks to the previous forms)”
20.	<i>mi-ra</i>	PY Eb 905, etc.	“Mira (≈ Lydia)”
21.	<i>pa-pa-ra-ko</i>	PY Jn 845	“Paphlagōn (< Paphlagonia ≈ Hit. <i>Pala</i>)”
22.	<i>ai-ku-pi-ti-jo</i>	KN Db 1105	“Aiguptios (< <i>ḥwt-k’-Ptḥ</i> “soul-house of Ptah [= Memphis]”))”
23.	<i>a-ra-si-jo</i>	KN Df 1229, etc.	“Alasian (Hit. Alašya = Cyprus)”
24.	<i>ku-pi-ri-jo</i>	KN Fh 347, etc.	“Kuprios”
25.	<i>su-ri-jo</i>	KN X 5962	“Syrian”
26.	<i>a-ra-da-jo</i>	KN As 1516	“Arwadian”
27.	<i>po-ni-ke-ja</i>	KN Ln 1568	“Phoinikeiāi”
	<i>po-ni-ki-jo</i>	KN Ga 418	“Phoenician”
28.	<i>tu-ri-jo</i>	KN Nc 4473, etc.	“Tyrian”

⁷ *Mira* is the name for the remainder of the kingdom of *Arzawa* after its defeat by Mursilis II in 1319 BC, whereas *Aššūwa* or *Asia* refers to a shortlived coalition of forces from *Wiluša* or *Troy* in the north to *Lycia* in the south headed by the royal house of *Arzawa*, which dissolved after its defeat by the Hittite king Tudḫēliyas I sometime during the latter half of the 15th century BC.

29. <i>ki-un-qa</i>	KN Ap 618	“Kinahhi or Kinahna (= Canaan)”
30. <i>ko-ki-da</i>	KN Sd 4403, etc.	“Kolkhidas (<Kolkhis, cf. Urartian Qulḥa)”
<i>Ko-ki-de-jo</i>	KN Fh 5465	“Kolkhideios”

Sources: Ventris & Chawick 1973: glossary, s.v.; Smit 1986-7: 50, nt. 14 (*mi-ra, ma-sa-de*); Palaima 1991: 280 (*na-u-pi-ri-jo*), 280, nt. 37 (*pa-pa-ra-ko*); 307 (*ku-pa-si-ja*); Hiller 1991: 214 (*ko-ki-da, ko-ki-de-jo*); Plath: 1994: 403 (*pe-ri-te-u*); Parker 1999: (*ki-ni-di-ja, mi-ra-ti-ja, ra-mi-ni-ja, ki-si-wi-ja, a-swi-ja, to-ro, pa-pa-ra-ko, wo-di-jo, i-mi-ri-jo, ru-ki-jo*); Morris 2001 (*a-pa-si-jo*); Aravantinos, Godart & Sacconi 2001 (*mi-ra-ti-jo*); Woudhuizen 2004-5 and Woudhuizen forthc. 1: chapter 1, passim.



Map II (a) Place names from the Aegean list of Amenhotep III at Kom el-Hetan; (b) Findspots of objects with the cartouche of Amenhotep III or his wife Tiye.

(a) Place names from the Aegean list of Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC) from his temple-tomb at Kom el-Hetan

Statue-base En	Linear B (KN)	
A. <i>k-f-ti-w ḥi:st</i>	[<i>kaptara</i> Akk.]	“Crete”
B. <i>tí-ní-y-w</i>	<i>da-na-jo</i>	“Danaoi (or Danaia)”
1. <i>i'-m-n-y-š'</i>	<i>a-mi-ni-so</i>	“Amnisos”
2. <i>b'-y-š':-ti-y</i>	<i>pa-i-to</i>	“Phaistos”

3. <i>kʰ-tw-nʰ-y</i>	<i>ku-do-ni-ja</i>	“Kydonia (= Khania)”
4. <i>m-w-k-iʰ-nw</i>		“Mycenae”
5. <i>dy-qʰi-iʰ-s</i>	<i>te-qa-ja</i>	“Thebes”
6. <i>m-y-dʰ-nʰ-i hʰst</i>	[<i>me-za-na PY</i>]	“Messenia (= Nikhoria)”
7. <i>nw-pi-rʰ-i-y hʰst</i>	<i>na-u-pi-ri-jo</i>	“Nauplia”
8. <i>kʰ-ti-y-rʰ hʰst</i>	<i>ku-te-ro</i>	“Kythera”
9. <i>wʰ-iw-r-y-i</i>	<i>to-ro</i>	“Wilios (= Troy)”
10. <i>kʰ-in-yw-šʰ</i>	<i>ko-no-so</i>	“Knossos”
11. <i>iʰ-m-n-y-šʰ</i>	<i>a-mi-ni-so</i>	“Amnisos”
12. <i>ry-kʰ-ti</i>	<i>ru-ki-to</i>	“Lyktos (= Malia)”
13. [<i>sʰ</i>]- <i>i</i> [-] <i>tʰ</i> [- <i>y</i>]	<i>se-to-i-ja</i>	“Siteia”
14. []		“?”
15. []		“?”

(b) Objects with the cartouche of Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC) or his wife Tiye from Aegean findspots

1. Ayia Triadha	ivory scarab, stamp seal
2. Kydonia	faience scarab
3. Mycenae	vase of frit, 2 faience scarabs, 9 faience plaques
4. Panaztepe	scarab
5. Knossos	faience scarab
6. Ayios Elias	faience scarab
7. Ialysos	faience scarab

Sources: Edel 1966; Edel 1988; Haider 1988: 3-6; Cline 1994: 40; Map 3; Cline 2001: 236-250; Map 3; Edel & Görg 2005: 161-123; Faltafel 2.13-14; for the corresponding Linear B forms, see Ventris & Chadwick 1973: glossary, s.v.

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