

**“ KORYVANTES ”**  
**Association of Historical Studies**



ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΩΝ ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ

**ΚΟΡΥΒΑΝΤΕΣ**



**KORYVANTES** Association of Historic Studies

The Man-Made Economic-Military Disaster of the mid-12th Century B.C.  
and the reconstruction through means of experimental archaeology  
of the military technology that it brought about



A study by members of  
**KORYVANTES** Association

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## KORYVANTES Association – who we are

- KORYVANTES Association of Historic Studies is a small Organization of 25 members formed in 2009 as a non-profit Legal Association
- Financed by members funding with absolutely no connection to Government or other means and resources
- Recent formation & compact size, yet having a big impact on Ancient Greek Re-enactment worldwide
- Main focus is the study of Greek Warfare through means of Experimental Archaeology in a multilayered approach including tactics, formations, armor, weapons, training
- Covered Eras : **15<sup>th</sup> Century BC to 15<sup>th</sup> Century AD**
- Key objective is the development of a Unique Intellectual Property around Ancient Greek Warfare, a major differentiation to traditional Re-enactment – findings are published in the press and internet



# KORYVANTES Association – key principles

- **HISTORIC ACCURACY**

A painstaking study of Academic Archaeology papers and latest research findings

- **ABSOLUTE QUALITY**

Unique masterpieces of hand-made battle ready Ancient Greek armor

- **UNIQUE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Generation of an Intellectual Property with maximum penetration in multiple areas of modern society (sports, press, multimedia, art, lifestyle, etc.)

- **EXTENDED TEAMWORK**

Collaboration with key people and organizations to maximize the impact of our work

- **INDEPENDENCE**

NO politics, NO propaganda of any kind, NO dependency on third party financing

- **ABSOLUTE BELIEF** in the **POTENTIAL** and **SKILLS** of our members

New members take on big responsibilities at once (entry failure rate up to 80%)



# *“The Man-Made Economic Disaster of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE & the reconstruction of the Military technology that it brought about”*



A study on the Evolution of Aegean warfare  
from **Mycenaean Era** down to **Archaic Era**  
based on the findings of modern reconstruction



# Timeline of Cultural Periods of Aegean in Antiquity

TIMELINE (yrs. BCE)		CULTURAL ERA
8000	3600	Neolithic Aegean Era
3600	2200	Cycladic Era
2200	1600	Minoan Era
1600	1100	Mycenaean Era
1100	750	Geometric Era
750	490	Archaic Era
490	330	Classical Era
330	30	Hellenistic Era



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1600	1100	<b>Mycenaean Era</b>	– end after 12 <sup>th</sup> c. BCE disaster
1100	750	<b>Geometric Era</b>	– the intermediate Dark Age
750	490	<b>Archaic Era</b>	– emergence of classical Greece
490	330	Classical Era	
330	30	Hellenistic Era	



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The human models of our reconstruction comparison

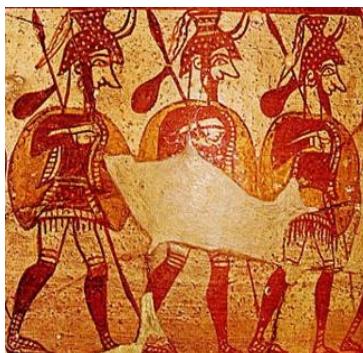


# Mycenaeans – in and out of myth

- The Mycenaean world in the myths



- The Mycenaean world emerging out of the archaeological excavation



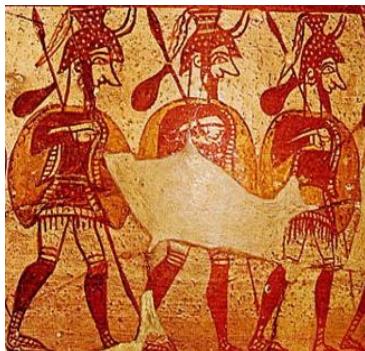


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- Early Archaic Homeric Epics [Iliad & Odyssey](#) narrating events relative to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century Mycenaean campaign at Troy
- Archaic myths referring to events before the Trojan war, e.g. [Labours of Hercules](#), [Theseus & Minotaur](#), [Jason & Argonauts](#)
- Fragments of references by a number of classical writers, e.g. Herodotus, Thucydides etc.



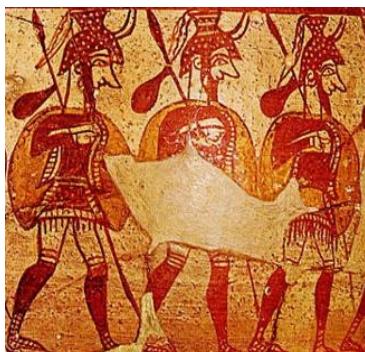


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- Fragments of references by a number of classical writers, e.g. Herodotus, Thucydides etc.
- Initiation of the field of Mycenaean Archaeology with the sites of [Troy](#), [Mycenae](#) and [Knossos](#)
- Mycenaean sites throughout the Greek peninsula and the Aegean space, e.g. [Tiryns](#), [Thebes](#), [Palaiokastro](#), [Iolkos](#), [Aiani](#), [Assiros](#), [Melos](#), [Pavlopetri](#) among many
- Archaeological findings in Eastern Mediterranean related to Mycenaean, e.g. [Hattusha](#), [Kition](#), [Ugarit](#), [Ashkelon](#), [Karnak](#)
- Deciphering of [Linear B](#) syllabic writing system used on [Mycenaean tablets](#) providing the verdict on Mycenaean identity



# Mycenaean geography in the Aegean of 16<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE

## Mycenaean palatal states

- **Mycenaean** refers to sites tightly linked to the political and cultural sphere of the **palatal-run states** of the mainland
- In early 2<sup>nd</sup> mil. BCE, Mycenaean sites are tightly linked to Minoan Crete
- By mid-2<sup>nd</sup> mil. BCE, the mainland states, built around fortified citadels, rise to dominate the Aegean

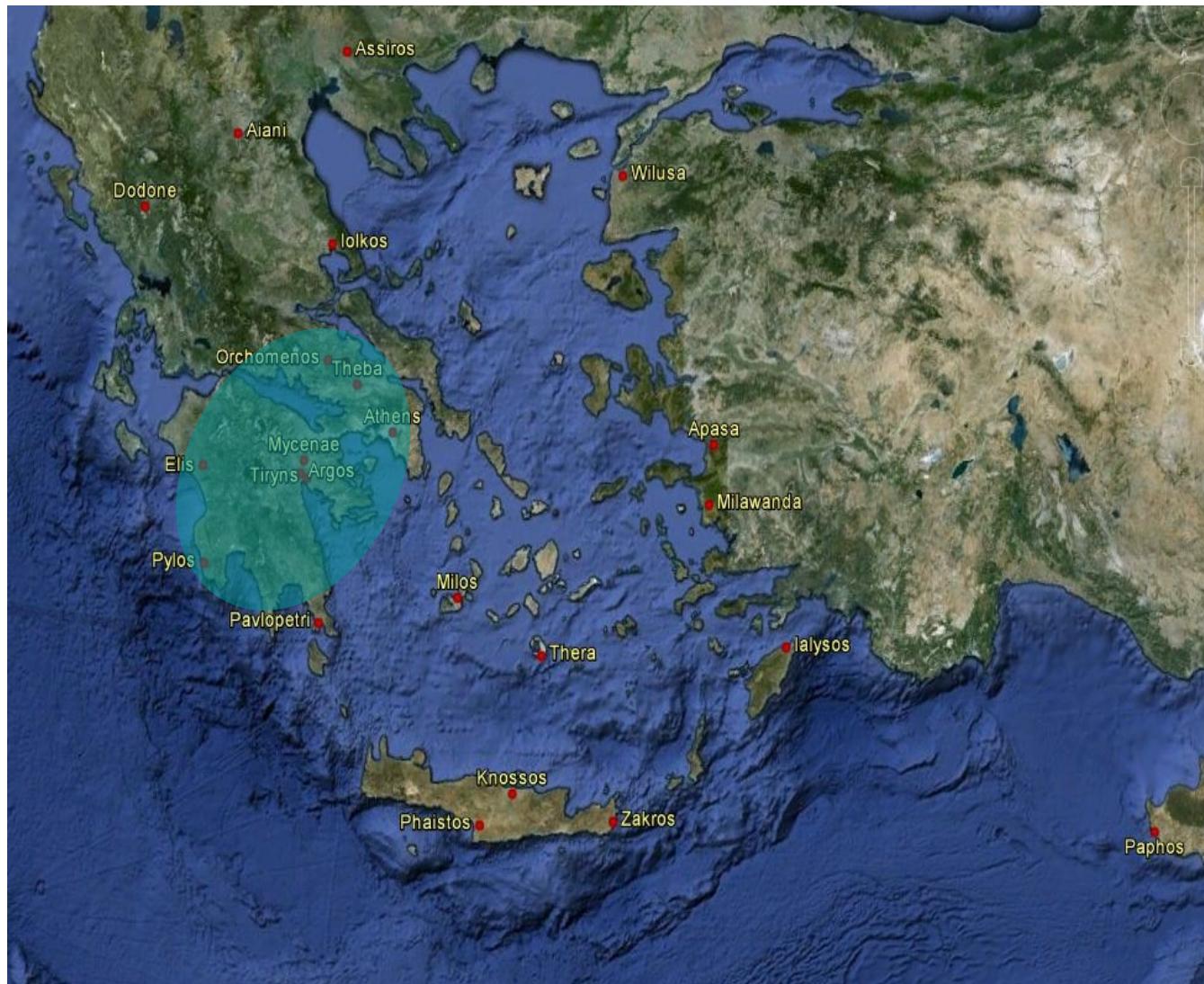




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- Mycenaean sites' epicentre is between Thebes and Pylos centred around the region of Argolis and the powerful city of Mycenae





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## Mycenaean palatal states

- Mycenaean sites' epicentre is between Thebes and Pylos centred around the region of Argolis and the powerful city of Mycenae
- But many important Mycenaean sites are found throughout the Greek peninsula from north to south

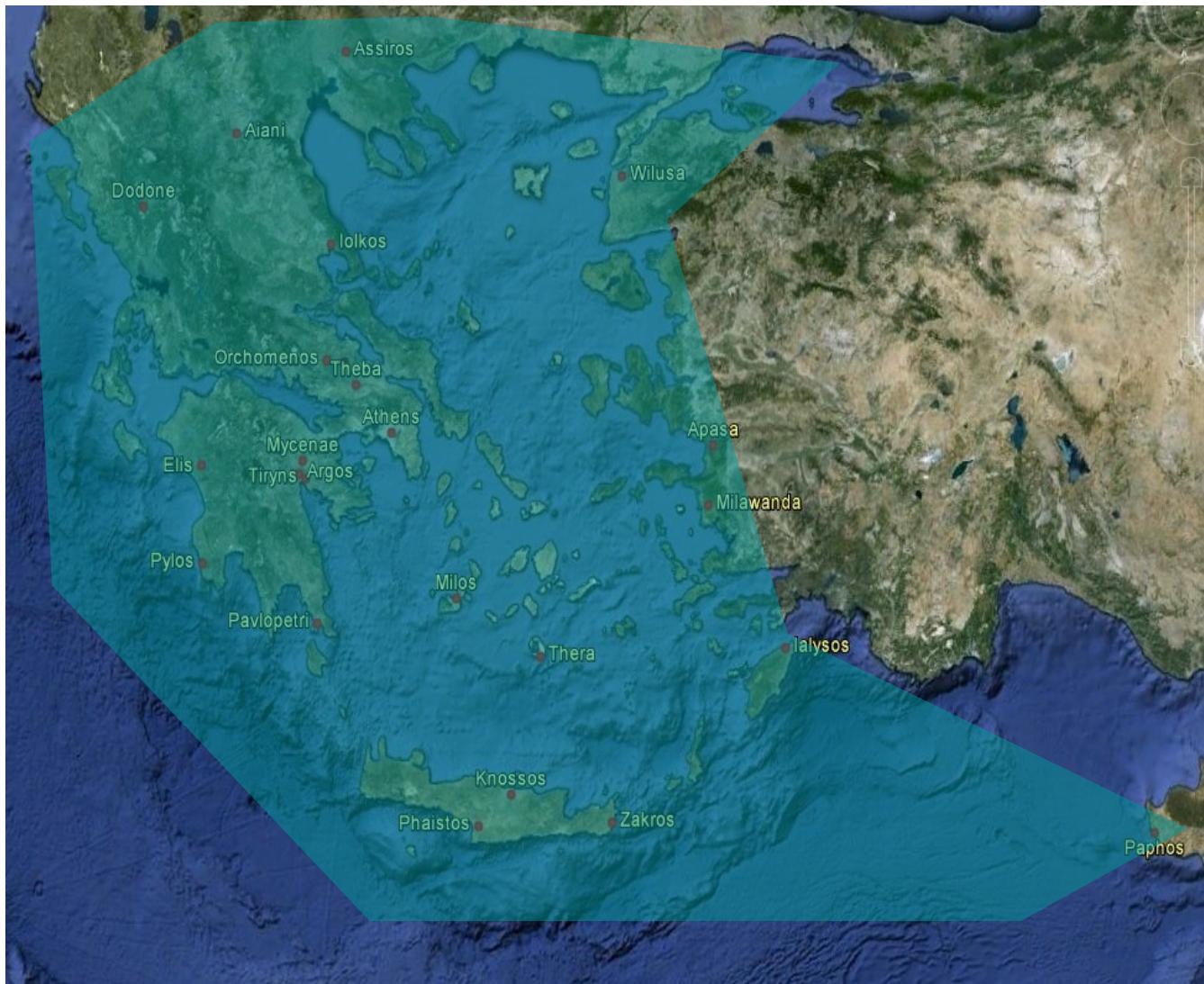




# Mycenaean geography in the Aegean of 16<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE

## Mycenaean palatal states

- By 16<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, Minoan sites such as **Knossos** and **Phaistos** continue as Mycenaean sites
- By 14<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, Minor Asian cities of **Wilusa**, **Apasa** and **Milawanda** belong in Mycenaean sphere (Troy, Ephesus and Miletus) while west Cyprus is colonised
- By 13<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, **Mycenaean world is strikingly similar to Archaic Greek world**





## Mycenaean geography in the world of 14<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE

- To comprehend better the actual positioning and nature of the Mycenaean culture, a larger perspective is necessary





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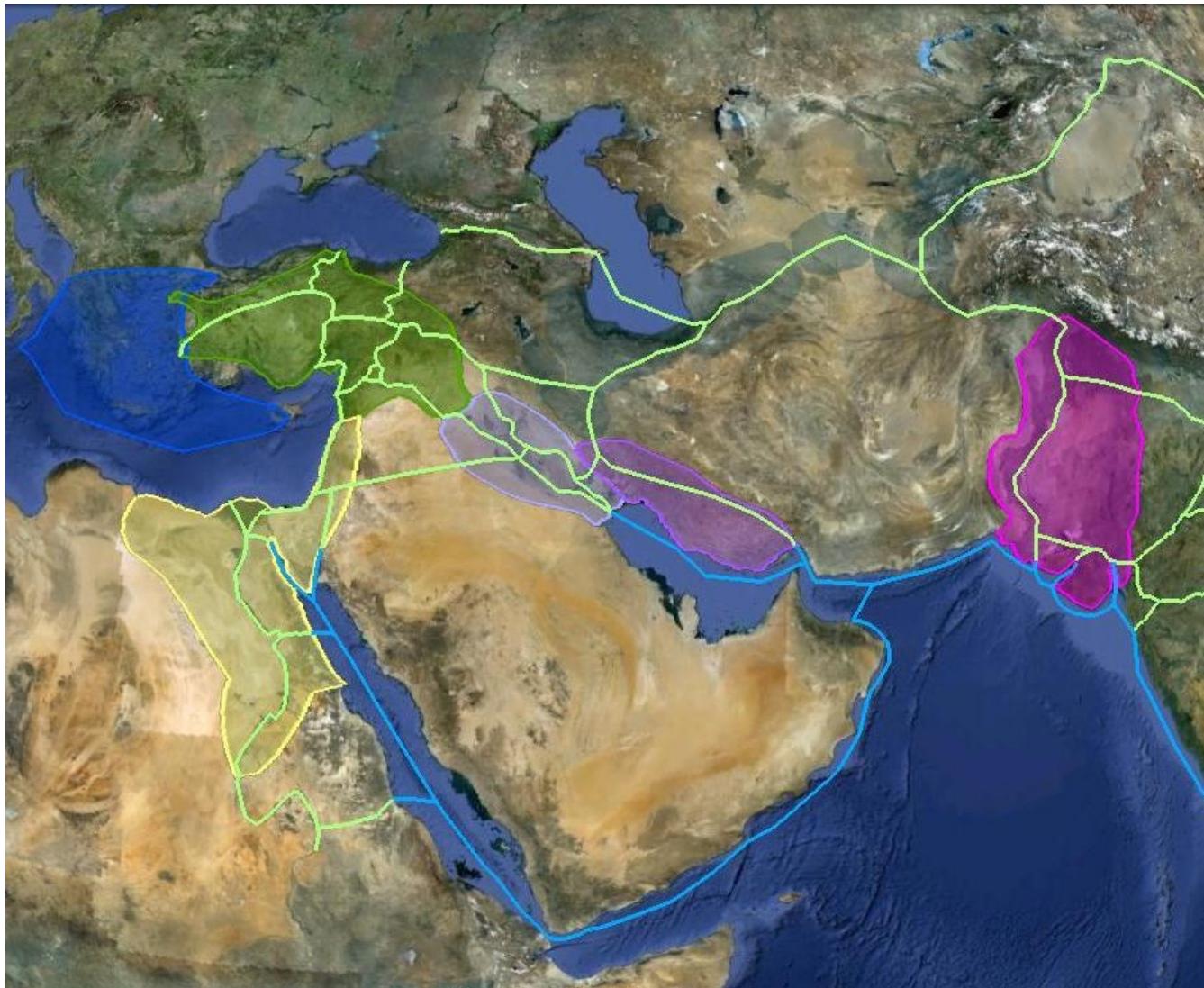
- To comprehend better the actual positioning and nature of the Mycenaean culture, a larger perspective is necessary
- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> mil. BCE the developed world is concentrated in the southern part of Eurasian landmass
- Great powers of the later 2<sup>nd</sup> mil. BCE revolve around the commercial routes along the great rivers of [Nile](#), [Tigris](#) & [Euphrates](#) and [Indus](#)





## Mycenaean geography in the world of 14<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE

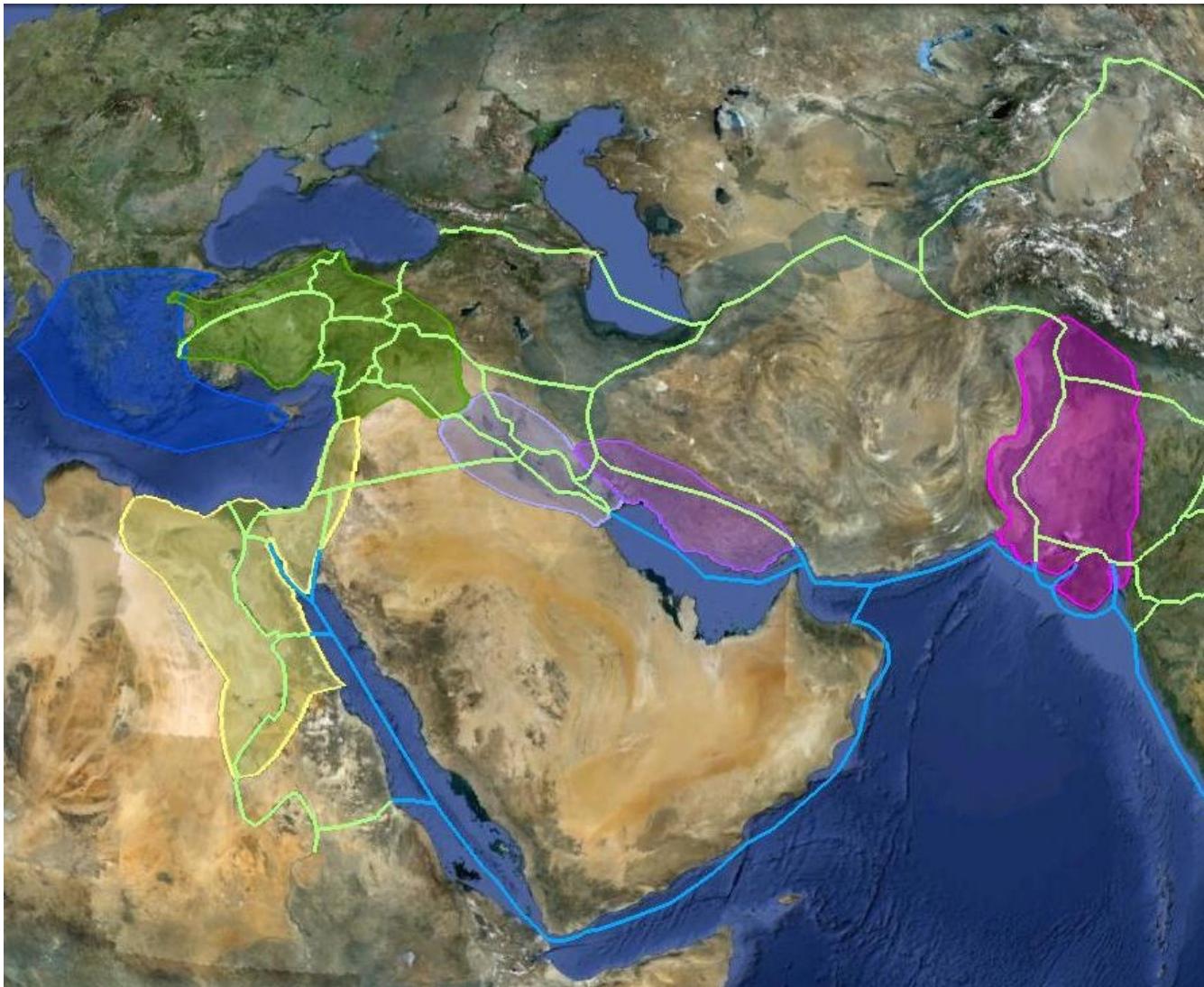
- The major powers of these times are **Egypt**, **Hatti**, **Kassite** **Babylonia**, **Elam**, and **Hindu states** – they all concentrate along: 2 major traderoutes
- **1<sup>st</sup>: the maritime route** reaching Egypt
- **2<sup>nd</sup>: the terrestrial one** reaching Mesopotamia
- These major commercial routes converge on coastal **Phoenicia & Palestine** and end into Minor Asia





## Mycenaean geography in the world of 14<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE

- Mycenaeans are the westernmost part of the developed world – the only civilisation rising away of big rivers





## Mycenaean geography in the world of 14<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE

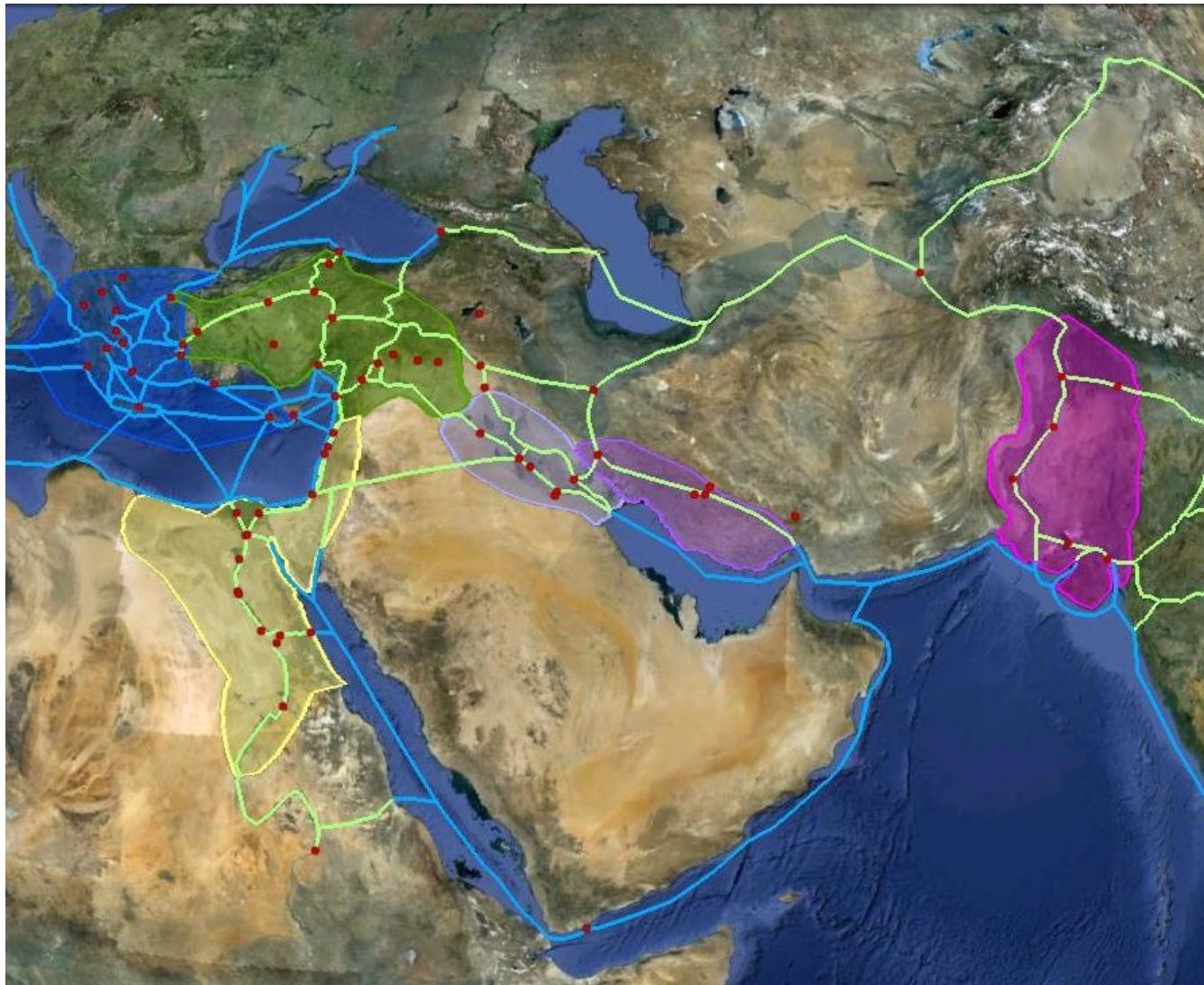
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- Mycenaeans are the westernmost part of the developed world – the only civilisation rising away of big rivers
- They defy the rule: in 2<sup>nd</sup> mil. BCE the world's biggest cities are all laying along the major world traderoutes
- But Mycenaeans **create their own maritime traderoutes**, therefore they impose as a driving force in global commercial networks





# The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE



- By 16<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, Mycenaean fleets start progressively to link the Eastern traderoutes to Europe's rivers flowing into Black Sea and west Mediterranean  
Coupled with Minoans, Mycenaeans form the world's first known true Maritime Power



# The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE



- In 16<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, affairs are more complicated in the East: Egyptians, Mitannis-Hurrians, Hittites, Assyrians, Kassite Babylonians and Elamites are in constant warfare for the control of the international traderoutes – admirably, without setting back international trade



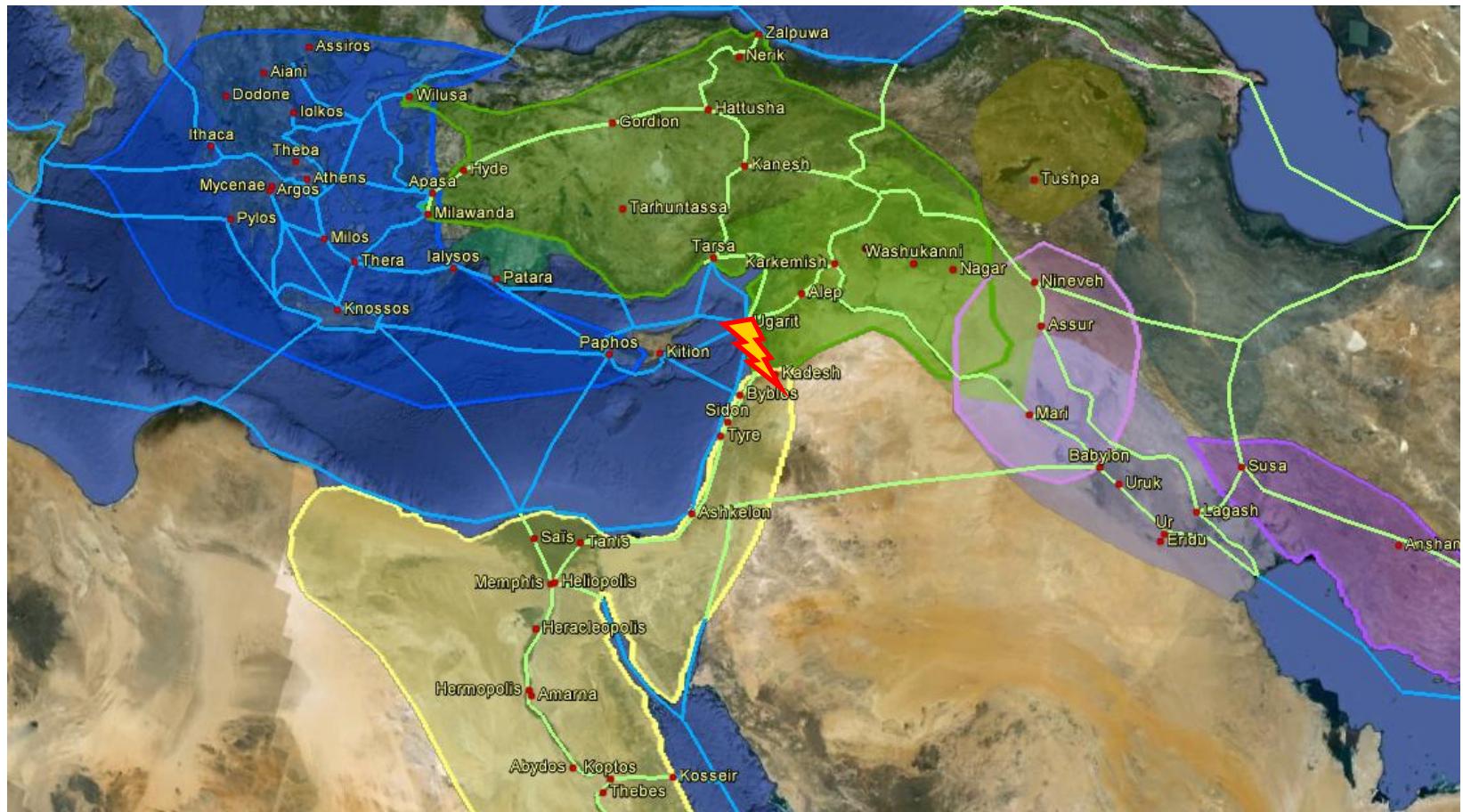
# The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE



- In 15<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, 3 major eastern powers prevail: **Egypt** expanding up to Phoenicia, **Hatti** recovering control over upper Mesopotamia and expanding to much of Minor Asia apart Lukka and **Kassite Babylonia** ruling over lower Mesopotamia eventually losing to **Assur**



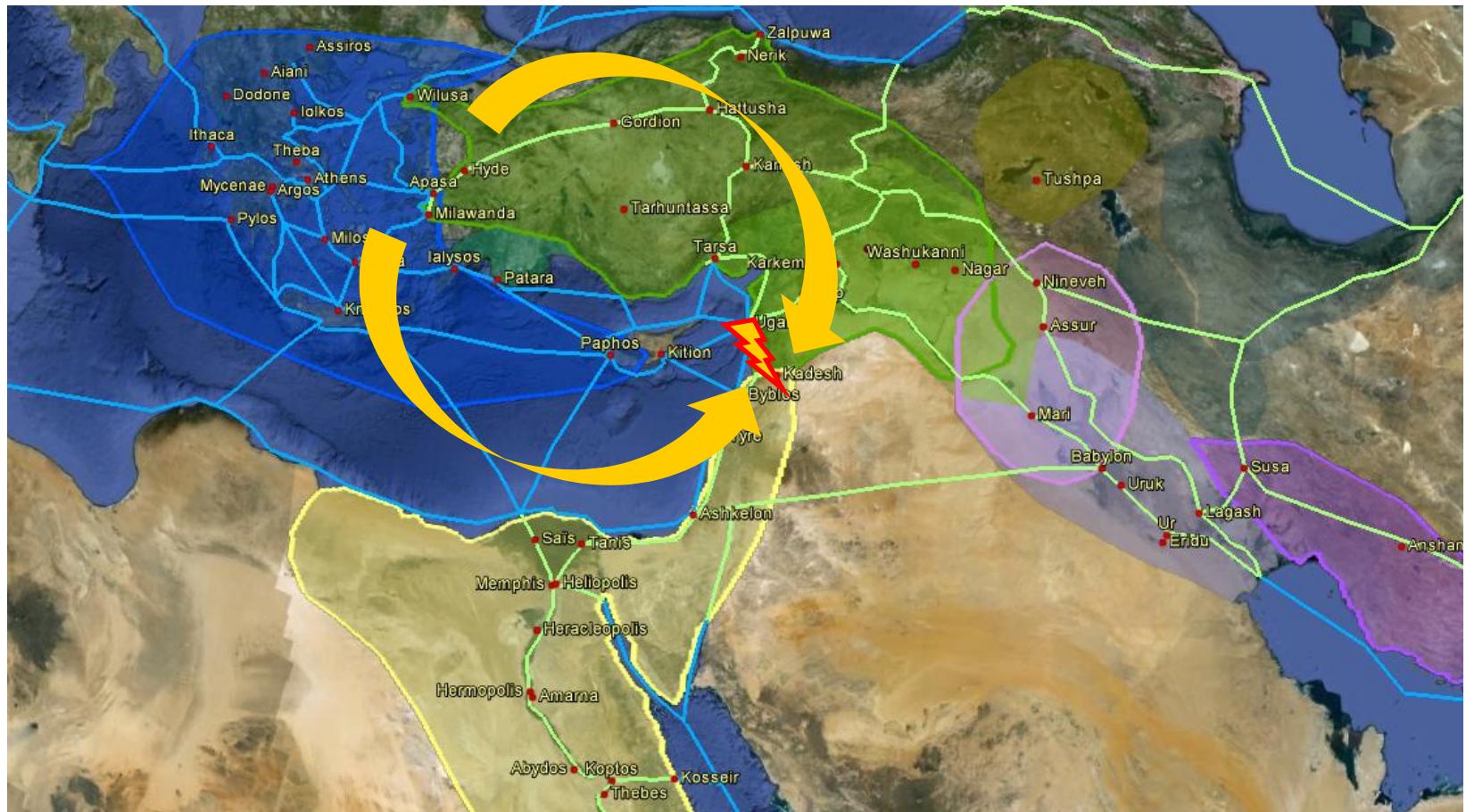
# The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE



- In 13<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, the balance is again upset: Kassite Babylonia withers, Assur takes control while powerful Egypt and Hatti clash over the control of the Eurasian traderoutes at **Kadesh** – an epic battle at the peak of late Bronze Age chariot-based warfare



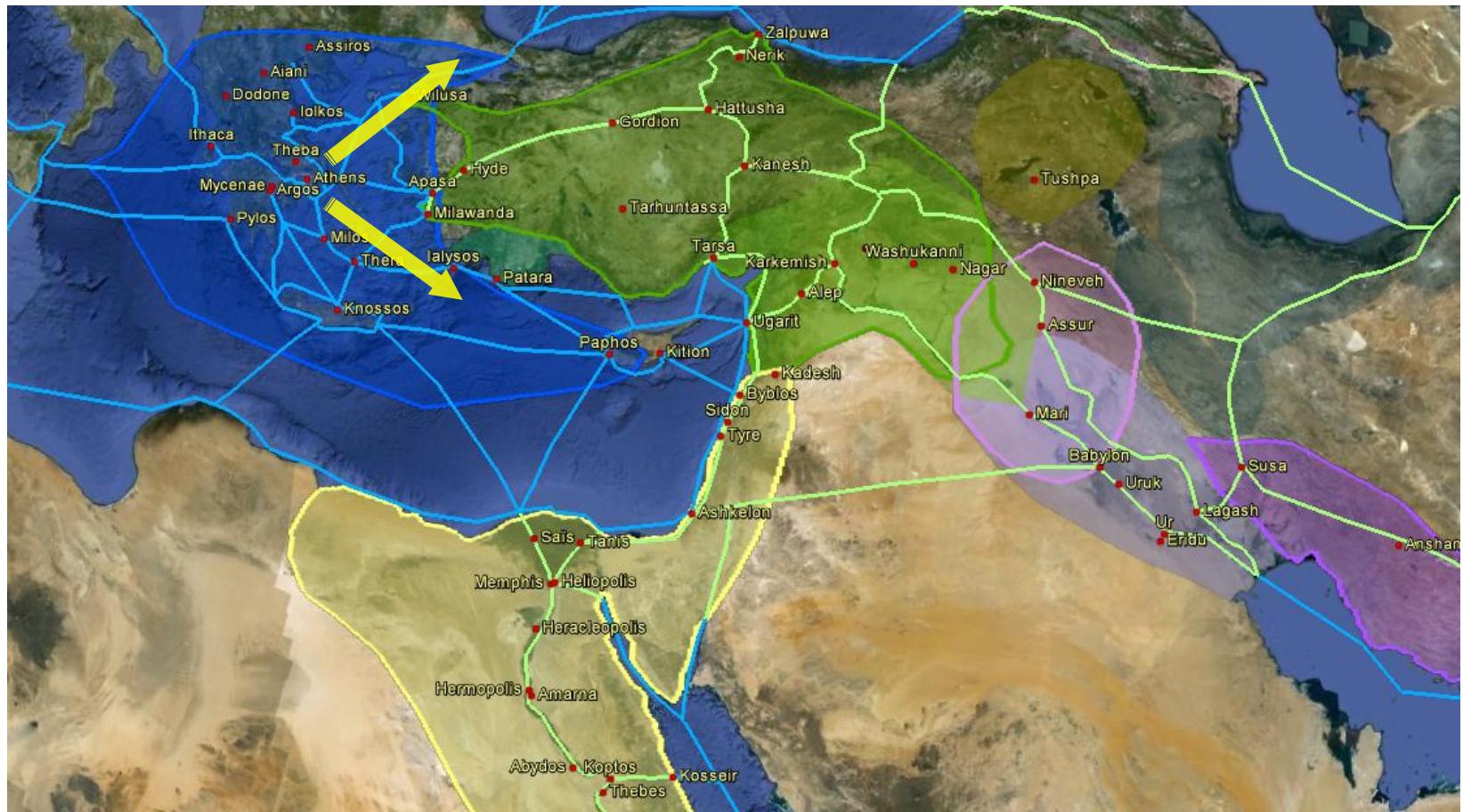
## The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE



- In the battle of Kadesh (1274 BCE), the two super-powers mobilise a large number of allied and mercenary forces, among others from Aegean region: Egyptians employ western Aegean navies and armies while Hittites employ armies from northeast Aegean coastline



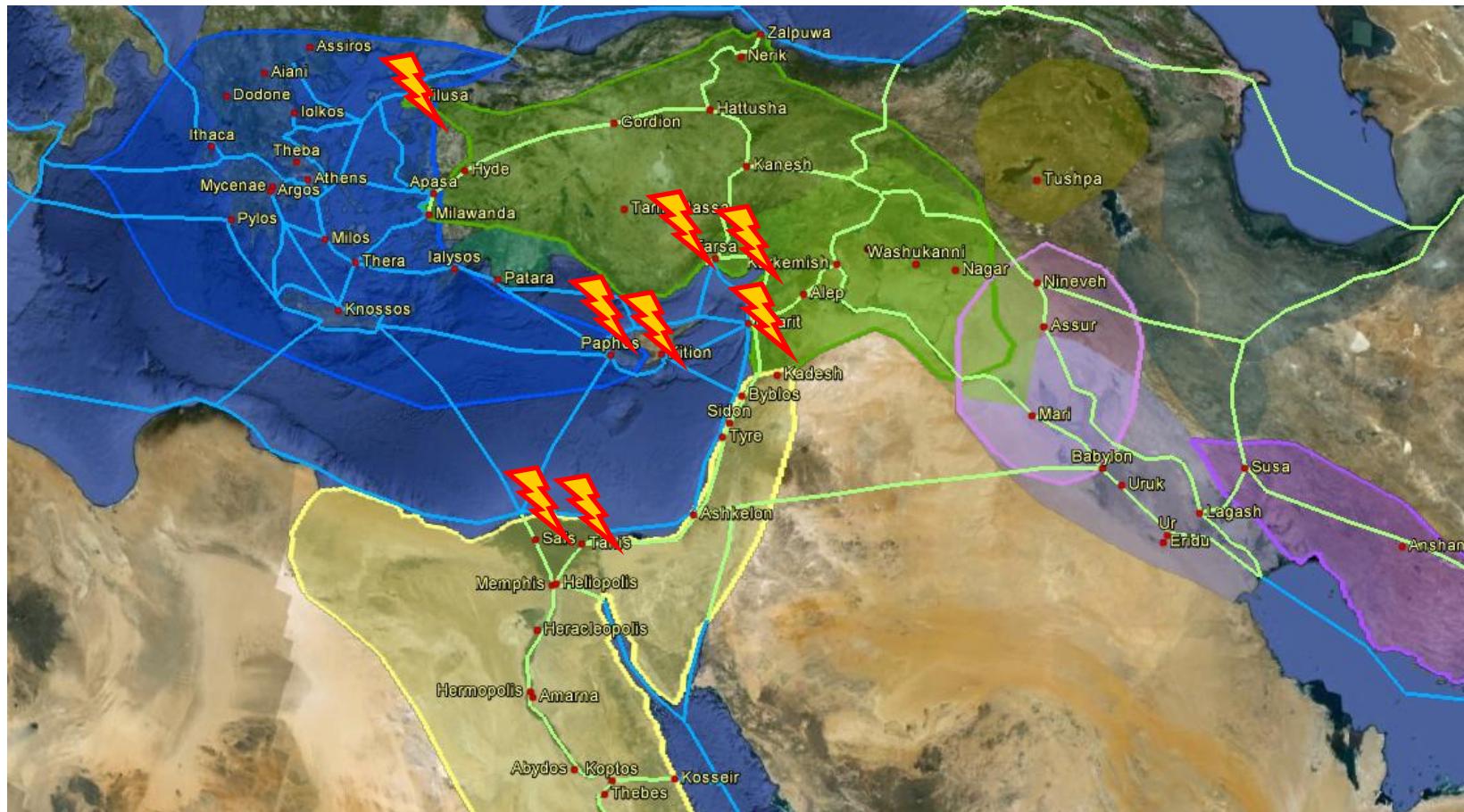
# The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE



- By late 13<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, the conflict of Hatti vs. Egypt remains indecisive weakening both while the western and eastern Aegean states, the latter (including some Mycenaeans too) being allies and vassals of Hittites, enter another conflict over the north/south-eastern sea-routes



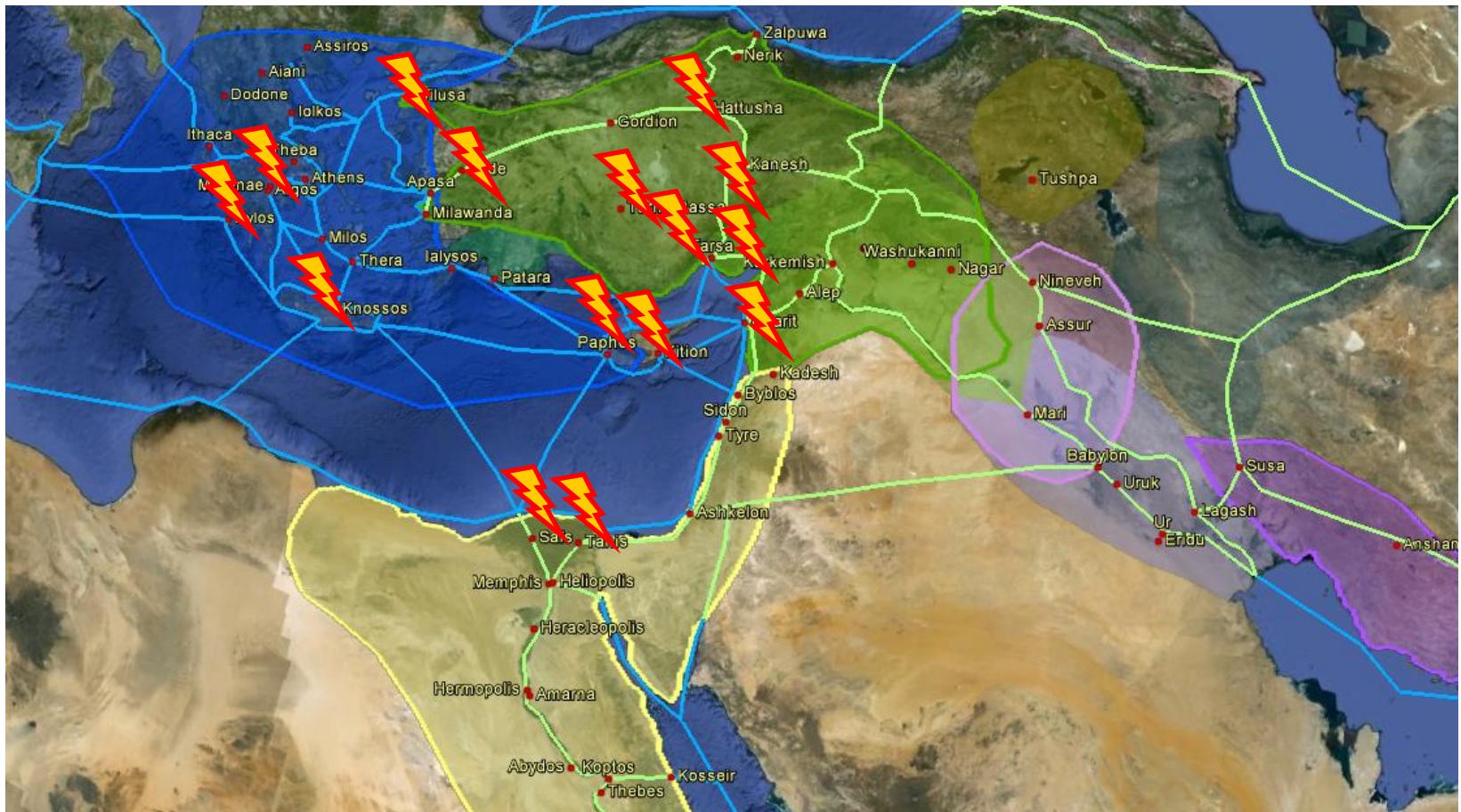
# The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE



- On the turn of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, west Aegean Mycenaeans send their navies to face the east Aegean alliance at [Troy](#) (Wilusa). Following that epic campaign, a series of destructive raids by **“Sea People”** hit ports of Hittite interests, turning also against Egyptian ones



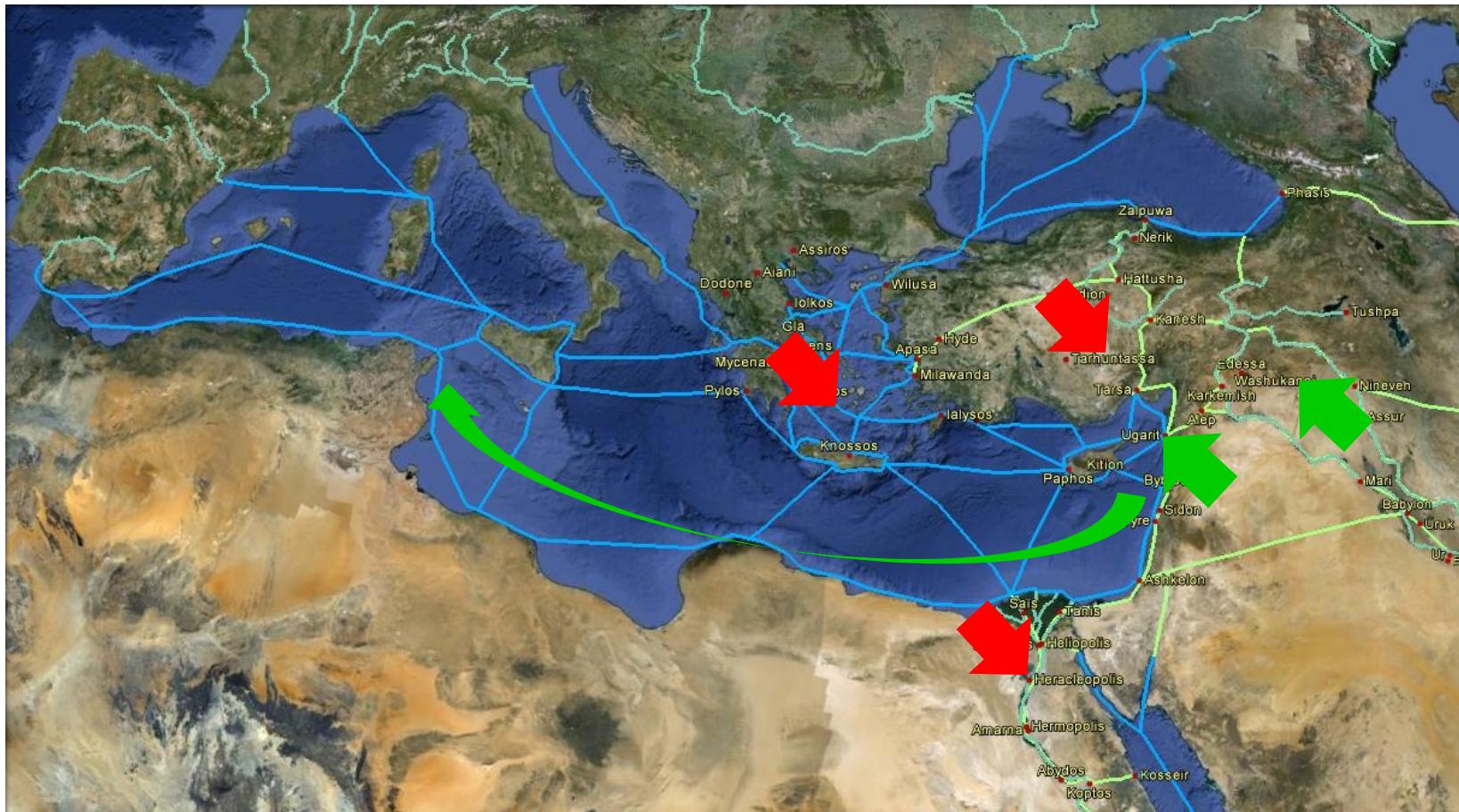
# The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE



- By mid-12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, and after the span of 2-3 decades, most of north-eastern Mediterranean coastal ports are destroyed all while the violence reaches the very heart of the Hittite kingdom as well as the Mycenaean palace-run states: all are burnt down



## The financial-military catastrophe of 12<sup>th</sup> c. BCE

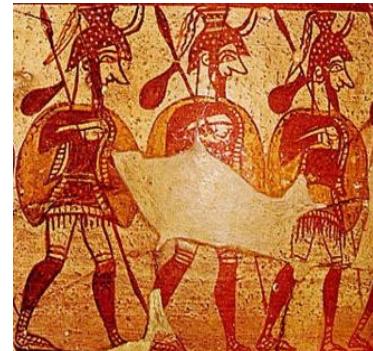


- By 11<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, the long standing traderoutes have collapsed: Hittites are obliterated, Egyptians suffer a big setback and the Aegean enters a Dark Age – winners are **Assyrians** in Mesopotamia and **Phoenicians** operating the South Mediterranean Traderoute



## End of the Mycenaean Era – Dark Age – Archaic Era rising

- The Mycenaean world falling (post 1100 BCE)



- The Archaic world rising



- The Mycenaean kingdoms collapse and fall prey to invasions by neighbouring fellow tribes or to internal strife or very often to both
- The long established traderoutes between Aegean and the East reach near-extinction – access still exists in the absence of strong opponents in Minor Asia but the means are not there anymore
- The Aegean societies backstep to a more agrarian lifestyle with populations becoming impoverished and illiterate – this initiates a mass emigration that will define the future of the Mediterranean
- The Aegean populations, then known as Greeks, re-establish a new order in the form of tiny kingdoms, federations and city-states, and their economies gradually re-develop the sea-trade
- Having established numerous colonies since the Dark Age all around the Mediterranean Greeks reconstruct the Mycenaean routes rising again antagonistically to Middle Eastern commerce
- Greece becomes again the culturally evolved, progressive, militarist, maritime power it had been in the Mycenaean Era



# Mycenaean Warrior of Late Bronze Age Era (1300-1200 BCE) VS Early Archaic Hoplite (800-600 BCE)

- The present reconstruction comparison is set between
  - A Mycenaean Warrior of late Mycenaean Era from a Middle Eastern Colony
  - A mid-Archaic Era Hoplite soldier from mainland Greece
- Note that the distance separating them is dictated more by the immense catastrophic events far more than the temporal distance of 500 years !





# Mycenaean Warrior VS Early Archaic Hoplite – Similarities (1)



- **Technologically advanced**  
Advanced technology in production with use of appropriate materials
- **Innovative**  
Technical innovation in metallurgy for producing big metallic plates
- **A big investment**  
In research and construction time



- **Offer increased protection**  
An obvious tendency for increased armor protection  
The tendency for full body protection demonstrates the **Greeks' inner need for martial superiority** – the conflict transforms into the art of war
- **Express the Decisive Battle Dogma**  
Heavy armor means “I stand my ground” in the defense of land and people, i.e. decisiveness, readiness for anything and belief in the axiom of “decisive battle”



# Mycenaean Warrior VS Early Archaic Hoplite – Similarities (2)



- **Idealized Forms**

The conceptual morphed types of both warriors stand for in the ideals of their respective societies in terms of **technology**, **morals of war**, **martial tactics** and **aesthetics**

- **Heroic ideal**

The moral and ideological framework of both warriors is the Heroic Ideal as described by Homer (**Heroism**, **Egoism**, **Antagonism** with his peers to **be more Brave and Noble**)



- **Heavy Infantry**

Both warrior types are the product of a strong and longitudinal **culture of the heavy infantryman** traced throughout the Hellenic History. This in its turn means developed urban life, and the **warrior's attachment with his ancestral land**

- **Limited armor ownership**

Armor ownership is limited to a closed circle of Nobles and Palace Officials. In this sense weapons and armor are a clear demonstration of social status



## Mycenaean Warrior VS Early Archaic Hoplite – Similarities (3)



- **Focal points of conflict**

Both Mycenaean Warrior & Archaic Hoplite are the focal points of conflict operating like walking ramparts around which lesser warriors fight

- **Dissimilarity with the mass of army**

There is a dissimilarity of equipment and tactics among various military detachments that leads to a fluid battle – the armored nobles dominate it



- **Existence of similarly equipped opponents**

- In both cases, most wars were fought among Greeks who had similar equipment and tactics
- opponents were armored and powerful thus in both cases there was need of equipment for breaking armor (axes & special piercing weapons)

*=> only later in Persian Wars when Greeks clashed in a large scale with an opponent having a different war doctrine*



# Mycenaean Warrior VS Early Archaic Hoplite – Conclusions



We can thus conclude that

- The way of fighting remained pretty much the same between the two Eras
- There is a continuation of the noble fighting as described by Homer
- It was the introduction of the hoplite phalanx that brought this dogma to an end





# Mycenaean Armor VS Archaic Armor – Similarities

- **High-end know-how**

The most advanced of their time – there was no technical knowledge outside the Helladic World capable of producing these items

- **Same materials**

Use of the same materials for defensive weaponry in both periods

- **Bronze usage**

Generalized usage of Bronze – both Copper and Tin, needed for production of Bronze, were expensive imported commodities

- **Focus on defensive equipment**





# Mycenaean Armor VS Archaic Armor – Differences (1)

In comparison to the Archaic Armor

## The Mycenaean Armor

- covers better the wearer (design on anatomy)
- offers enhanced protection (design on material)
- is bulkier and heavier
- is more complicated due to use of articulations
- reduces mobility
- requires more resources for its construction
- takes longer to manufacture
- permits a greater variety of armor types in various configurations adapting to human anatomy due to use of articulated parts

*The large amounts of bronze arrow tips excavated at the sites of Mycenaean palace complexes may indicate use of such heavy armors as means of dealing with massed archery*





## Mycenaean Armor VS Archaic Armor – Differences (2)

In comparison to the Archaic Armor

### The Mycenaean Armor in action

- covers upper parts negating shield usage thus the of the large ox hide shield is not required
- it offers, in that indirect way, greater mobility
- It contrasts the archaic hoplite armor that is used always with a shield requiring direct flexibility
- forced sword fighting to evolve – its small openings and use of pauldrons imply that sword fight would be employing more crushing than pointing

*Judging by the armor itself and the swords in use at the time, Mycenaean sword fighting would bear little resemblance to modern fencing*





## Mycenaean Armor VS Archaic Armor – Differences (3)

In comparison to the Archaic Armor

### The Mycenaean Armor visual aesthetic

- Presents in the battlefield an “[inhuman killing machine](#)” trapped in a metallic shell – largely due to the use of articulated armor plates
- Its non-anthropomorphic form projects a nightmarish image to his enemy





# Mycenaean Armor VS Archaic Armor – Differences (4)

In comparison to the Mycenaean Armor

## The Archaic Armor visual aesthetic

- is **Anthropocentric**
- aggrandizes the human body
- is **Anthropomorphic** with features in armor such as the “triangular torso”, imitation of chest anatomy, usage of the abdominal arch and the alba line
- follows the artistic shaping of this time that has a tendency to worship the human form more (as the human faced gods cults become more popular)
- attempts to create the impression of an “ideal archaic body”

*Everything is now closer to the common man's level. The whole culture chooses the mortal human body as its focal point thus opening the road for the miracle of Classical Athens*





## Mycenaean Armor VS Archaic Armor – Differences (5)



- The Archaic hoplite does not have pauldrons thus mobility is favored over full protection – probably also highlighting a decline of massed archery
- Mycenaean Armor hides the human form while Archaic Armor highlights it
- In the early Archaic armor there are no scales in an attempt to present the perfect human form
- In Archaic panoply all armor accessories try to imitate the human form – greaves are distinct right and left while Mycenaean greaves are identical
- To be noted that archaic helmets gradually lose their bestial outlook
- The Archaic hoplite can be viewed like a mobile metallic kouros (Talos?) or a naked shiny metal statue – an expression of the Heroic Nudity Ideal
- The appearance of decorative carvings in Archaic Armor transforms them into art work who even try to placate the nether gods



*The Mycenaean Warrior expresses with his armor his static collectivistic society while the Archaic Hoplite Armor features demonstrate social mobility. The Archaic panoply is a personal affair while the Mycenaean armor, because of the articulated parts can adapt to different body types (less individualistic item)*



# Mycenaean Armor VS Archaic Armor – Notes



## Importance of copper and bronze

- Copper and Bronze had metaphysical, almost divine qualities. The investment of the Archaic era statues with metal (bronze) parts elevated them to the level of divinity.
- The atavistic memories of the Place Societies collapse and the calamities linked to it were probably haunting the memories of the Archaic people and the sight of the metal encased (god like) hoplite was a reassurance that all would be done so that it would happen again

- The armor evolution from the Bronze Age to the Archaic Age may reflect the rise of the Hero cults such as Hercules: from a Hero of the Doric tribe to a Pan-Hellenic God. It wouldn't be inappropriate to suppose that the Archaic Hoplites, encased in their bronze anthropomorphic armor were taping on the strength of the deified Hero in order to fight and protect their society from danger



## Conclusions – What the differences in weaponry may hints to us

**Mycenaean Society => Heavy almost non changing armor => Conservatism**

**Archaic Society => Flexible armor => Colonialism, Innovation, Experimentation**





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Turning a Human to Minotaur....

**ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΟΥΜΕ !  
ΤΑΚΚ !**

