Ancient Western Asia Beyond the Paradigm of Collapse and Regeneration (1200–900 BCE)

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Edited by

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Interculturality and linguistic legacy in the Syro-Anatolian polities at the turn of the second millennium BCE

Federico Giusfredi, University of Verona

1. Interculturality

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *intercultural* means "taking place between cultures, or derived from different cultures."[1] While this concept is central to my topic, the definition is quite circular, unless one successfully defines what we want to consider as a *culture*. Fifty years ago, this task would have been much simpler, because a culture was defined archaeologically as a consistent and widespread material assemblage.[2] This concept was directly linked to an anthropological definition of culture (which still holds water at the textbook level) as a set of elements including "knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1871, 1). By the second half of the 20th century, before archaeologists started to cast serious doubts on the old-fashioned material culture-based and localized definition of human groups, linking the old archeological and anthropological definition to the linguistic one was quite tricky. Some linguists would have called a culture a group of people sharing a language. While the very definition of a culture in anthropology and archaeology has changed over the past decades, the model based on the equation "culture/identity group = a group sharing a language" has somehow survived because, even though it is over-simplistic and dangerous, provided a proper approach is employed, it still can be an important tool of investigation.

The best way to address both the methodology and the merit of the topic under discussion is to start from a naive observation: whatever the boundaries of the historical object of study,

1. This paper is a result of the project PALaC, that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (Grant Agreement n° 757299). I employ the abbreviations of the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderaiatischen Archäologie*.

2. Gordon Childe (1929, *Preface*). This definition, however, is no longer considered to be a legitimate one in the recent theoretical frameworks of post-processual and interpretive archaeology.

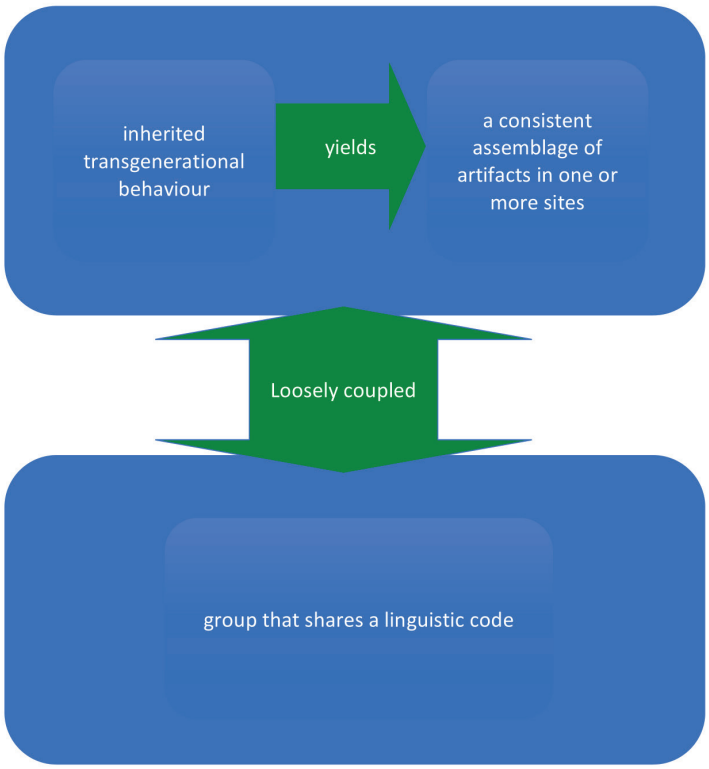

Figure 18.1. The correlation of the different definitions of "culture".

we are certainly dealing with a diachronic problem. When we study the past, we study the way systems changed. Even when we try to take a picture of a synchronic phase, we need to be aware that it is still a phase and describe its resilience towards a change that, in any case, is bound to occur. Synchronicity, in the study of the past, is the exception to the general rule of change. Inheritance over time (of behaviors, technologies, and uses of the language) and consistency (in the maintenance of self-attributed features) interact with each other, and with each approach following its own path, we can imagine a scheme like the one in the picture.

One should note, however, that the linguistic identity of a group remains *correlated*, but loosely coupled, with the dimension of proper cultural identity. Language is still the fundamental human capability; it traces contact and interference better than other types of evidence because the regularity of internal change over time makes unexpected outcomes stand out as induced by interference of some sort.

If a change in systems is usually quite evident, the preservation of a state requires some clarification as far as the terminology is concerned. What system theory calls "resilience" and what social sciences would probably call "identity" we shall, from a merely descriptive perspective, label "continuity." Diachronically, however, continuity can be a rather deceptive label, as it can be used both to indicate the process of physiological evolution within a single culture that maintains some fundamental identity traits and to describe continuity between cultures, which

means that a later culture maintains some features of a previous one, from which we want to distinguish it. In the former use, it denotes the conservation of identity. In the latter use, it indicates a pattern of diffusion, and pertains, once again, to contact.

It is therefore wiser to investigate innovation and change by distinguishing two patterns of change: internal change (evolution of a system), and contact-induced change, which is triggered by external factors. While it is clear that no historical transition is merely dependent upon internal evolution or upon contact, trying to measure the level of interculturality affecting a change by describing the patterns and networks of contact and diffusion is one of the fundamental tasks of scholars who study one or more ancient cultures.

2. The historical context

The Syro-Anatolian Dark Age, roughly corresponding to the mid-12th century BCE, is a phase of documentary half-silence, during which the historical, political, and cultural geography of the Ancient Near East was quite radically reshaped. For the Syro-Anatolian interface, a number of factors were involved.

- **The end of the Hittite kingdom:**
  - It happened sometime after the end of the 13th century BCE;[3]
  - It involved (yet another) abandonment of the Hittite capital city, Hattusa, by the royal court (Seeher 2001; de Martino 2018, 24ff.);
  - The crisis that caused it is apparent only in a limited number of documents;[4]
  - It involved a combination of military and environmental factors.
- **The possible partial continuation of the Anatolian "Hittite" culture:**
  - It relates to the origin of the Iron Age "Great Kings" and their putative connection to earlier royal families;[5]
  - It relates to the problem of the destiny of Anatolian cuneiform culture, which seems to be extinct already by the middle 12th century.[6]
- **The modification of the human geography:**
  - Depending on political innovation (collapse of the "regional" kingdoms);
  - Depending also on environmental factors, e.g., climate change and drought (Kaniewski et al. 2010).

3. For a recent discussion and excellent overview, see de Martino 2018, 23–24.

4. Consider, for instance, the late Hittite oaths, by which the last Hittite Great Kings probably attempted to ensure the support of the court and of the elites. Clear indications of the upcoming crisis, however, are not manifold, mostly due to the lack of administrative texts as well as the limited number of sources left by the last known ruler, Suppiluliuma II.

5. For a diffusion of the title MAGNUS.REX in the Hieroglyphic Luwian texts of the Iron Age, cf. Giusfredi (2010, 78–82).

6. *Pace* Payne (2015, 11), the use of cuneiform script in the Neo-Hittite kingdoms is no continuation of the Hittite scribal culture, but rather a reintroduction due to the influence of Assyria; cf. Giusfredi (2018a).

The periodization of the phase in which the Near Eastern world dramatically changed is relatively simple. But if one considers that, in all likelihood, the abandonment of Hattusa by the court of Suppiluliuma II or one of his successors lowers the end date of the Hittite kingdom to the first decades of the 12th century, we can compare it with the fall of Ugarit and the end of the Kassite dynasty between 1159 and 1155 BCE.

Babylon would be reconquered not much later by Nebuchadnezzar I, who defeated the Elamites in the 1120s. By the end of the 12th century BCE during the reign of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I (some 250 years into the elusive "Middle Assyrian" Age), the political geography of the Syro-Anatolian interface area already looked very much like the one described by the later kings of the Neo-Assyrian dynasty, who regularly campaigned there and whose annals provide us with a number of interesting itineraries. All in all, the Dark Age turns out to be very short: while a military crisis certainly took place in the 1170s and 1150s, it is evident that the mid-12th century BCE is better described as the apical point of a perfect storm. There was not much time for a large amount of migration and movement of people, and yet the human, cultural, and linguistic geography of Anatolia and the Levant seems to become completely different after this short and confusing historical gap.

3. Studying the outcomes of the crisis

While we have a significant number of narrative sources on political and military history for the final Bronze Age, for the Iron Age we mostly have archaeological, linguistic, and epigraphic indications of the cultural map of the Syro-Anatolian area. When the fog disappears, ignoring in this case the northeastern areas of Subartu (and later the Urartu), we are facing a three-element system, with the Aramaic, Luwian, and Phoenician components to account for. An important point to note is that these linguistic and cultural components did not suddenly emerge over a few decades in the middle of the 12th century BCE. And while the Luwians were settled there for obvious historical reasons (going back at least to the Hittite invasions in the 14th century BCE, but possibly earlier),[7] the emergence and large diffusion of the North Semitic component could be explained as a Late Bronze Age migration only by a very naive historical model. In all likelihood, as the Dark Age lasts no more than a few decades, new elements *did not* enter the scenario, they were already there, and they emerged due to the collapse of sociocultural dominant scaffoldings.

A precise geographical collocation of the "new" elements would be too complex to attempt within this paper. However, areas of superposition emerged very early, with Aramaic, Luwian, and Phoenician acting as three important languages that were employed in partially overlapping parts of the same region at the same time.

While the true boundaries of such areas are elusive—with several local cases of multilingualism—the general patterns of diffusion of the Luwian and Northwest-Semitic cultures are:

7. In particular, the Syro-Anatolian interface region of Cilicia, Luwo-Hittite Kizzuwatna, was probably a melting pot that included Hittite, Luwian, and Hurrian elements before Suppiluliuma's wars. Luwian rituals of the Kizzuwatna tradition (studied e.g., by Miller [2004]; cf. also Yakubovich [2011, 536ff.]; to mention just two of the many significant works), for instance, date back to the so-called Middle Hittite scribal phase, roughly corresponding to the 15th century BCE.

– The Luwians in southeastern Anatolia and in northern to central Syria;
– The Aramaeans throughout a large region that includes most of modern Syria with occasional texts coming from very peripheral areas to the south and northeast;
– The Phoenicians centered on the coastal portions of the Levant, but also attested epigraphically in far-away zones, including at least (and limiting ourselves to the regions we want to discuss) Cyprus, central and northern Syria, and Cilicia, up to the southern portion of the Anatolian Plateau.

Once this preliminary scenario has been presented, it is time to comment on its significance and evaluate its shortcomings. It is not possible to delineate an Aramaean core area (see also Valk, this volume). While the Phoenician presence on the coasts and the existence of the partly elusive political entity referred to by the name "Kingdom of Aram-Damascus"[8] argue for a spot in north-central Syria, it is a fact that several so-called Syro-Hittite principalities of the Syro-Cilician interface present obvious features of mixed culture. The Phoenicians also represent a serious historical problem: while their core area is well known, the penetration of the Phoenician epigraphic culture (I will not use the word "language" yet) in Cilicia and Anatolia requires discussion. Finally, it would be unsound not to mention the role, in this sketchy scheme, of a new putative "giant" that seems to have emerged during the early Iron Age: the kingdom of Walistin/Palistin. Despite the, admittedly, convincing toponymic equation with the modern name Palestine and some attempts to describe it as a large political entity based on two relatively small stelae found near Hama (some 250 km south of the capital city Kunalua, outside of any archaeological context[9]), it is a fact that the survival of a toponym does not guarantee cultural, political, or even linguistic continuity, so we are currently unable to establish if the Biblical Philistines were, in fact, Luwians or, if they were not, what relationship existed between their culture and the previous and neighboring ones.

All in all, the geo-cultural situation in the Syro-Anatolian area at the beginning of the Iron Age is very complex. When boundaries and patterns of diffusion are blurred, chances are that the historian and the linguist will need to admit the presence of a relatively large area of cultural superposition, which in turn makes it necessary to reconsider the conceptual tools and the metalinguistic labels employed for its description.

4. Who is who, and why, in the ancient Near East?

It is time to take a step back and look at the components of the patterns we are investigating. If we identify them in a methodologically reasonable way, the problems we want to solve will become apparent.

8. Cf. the voice *Damascus* in RlA II (1938, 104). The kingdom corresponds to the Kingdom of Imerišu as mentioned in the Neo-Assyrian sources by Adad-nerari III, Šalmaneser III, and Šalmaneser IV. The occurrences are now collected by the online database of the ORACC initiative, http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu /riao/cbd/qpn-x-places/SH.html (accessed October 2019).

9. Cf. Giusfredi (2018b) for some critical remarks.

What we are facing is a two-fold documentary model, which becomes three-fold because of the epigraphic nature of the corpora with which we are dealing. The three components, defined on three different levels of analysis are:

1. **Cultural identity:** Phoenician culture, Anatolian culture, culture(s) of the Aramaeans;
2. **Language:** Phoenician language, Luwian language, Aramaic (and Sam'alian language);
3. **Script:** Phoenician alphabet and writing system; Aramaic alphabet and writing system; Luwian hieroglyphs.

How did these levels interact, or, rather, how do we make them interact when we describe the picture? In other words: when is a Phoenician, a Phoenician? Do we call a group of people Phoenicians because of their material culture? No, unless we already have identified the area of attestation as a Phoenician one. Pots don't speak and material culture can migrate very easily. Thus, findings and assemblages are usually more useful to assume contacts or trading patterns rather than migration. Even iconography is a dangerous tool for identifying and labeling a group, as the Assyrian motifs in several Syrian polities can easily testify. Do we call them Phoenicians because the ancient sources do? Nothing would be more dangerous, because of the large number of mistaken identifications and misnomers one encounters in ancient literary sources. No matter how one puts it, no matter how badly a scholar wishes to criticize the role of written documents in favor of the supremacy of material evidence, the heuristic circle of ancient Near Eastern history still begins with the identification of an epigraphic culture.

Distinctions and caveats come only in a later phase, and they are extremely important because epigraphic and linguistic evidence can also be deceptive. But in the first place, one needs Hurrian to find the Hurrians.

5. Modelling relationship and contact

The picture has become quite complex, but it can easily be sorted out.

1. Identity groups are tentatively identified, in several cases by the identification of a shared language, or a shared number of languages if the culture is multilingual.
2. Comparative study of identity groups allows the identification of:
    a. Differences (required to produce a cultural periodization);
    b. Similarities.
3. Similar features between groups must be analyzed in order to identify:
    a. Polygenetic features, which may have emerged independently in different areas;
    b. Monogenetic features which probably had a single origin and then spread.

4. Monogenetic features must be examined and categorized as being:
    a. Shared by inheritance from a former common phase;
    b. Shared by areal diffusion.

This is a very general model. Most scholars already use it in whole or in part to study any possible aspects of ancient groups (e.g., when discussing their religion, ideology, iconography, writing praxis, and, of course, language). The biggest issue, however, is represented by steps 3 and 4—deciding if a shared feature is accidental (polygenetic), shared by inheritance, or shared by areal diffusion, can be very tricky.

In this perspective, the study of written documents represents, again, a privileged field of analysis. Indeed, mechanical sound changes and the evolution of languages allow the prediction of the outcome of mechanical diachronic phonetic laws, which means that the cases of common inheritance can be spotted without hesitation. A similar pattern can be extended to other aspects of the structure of languages with a fair degree of confidence. In other words, there is no doubt that the split-intransitivity of Luwian and Hittite[10] is due to common inheritance from Proto-Anatolian, while it is impossible to establish with absolute certainty whether the common religious features of the two cultures derived from a Proto-Anatolian scenario or were developed by one culture and then shared by the other.

Once language contact has been proven, identified, and categorized in one of the many types of interference scenarios that may exist (multilingual areas, monolingual interface areas, long-distance interference depending on trade, etc.), it is possible to reflect on the type of cultural contact that the specific types of interference entail, based on the following rather obvious (but sometimes neglected) principles.

1. When language contact is at work, some type of cultural contact must have existed (it is an asymmetric pattern, though: cultural contact may exist without inducing significant language change).
2. If interference between languages affects the grammar of one or more of the languages involved, the intercultural contact must have been extremely intensive, and areas of geographical contiguity must exist.
3. If interference is limited to the lexicon (loanwords, translated phraseologies, formulaic expressions in literary compositions), then the contact may have been indirect.
4. If the interference is limited to the lexicon but it is very intense, involving a large number of shared words and a fair amount of *Wanderwörter*,[11] then in all likelihood we are dealing with a scenario of regular trading networks.

10. This is known to most philologists as Garrett's Rule: clitic subject pronouns distribute regularly depending on the semantic roles selected by different intransitive verbs (Garrett 1990).

11. A *Wanderwort* is a cultural word, normally denoting an innovative technology or concept, that is shared by a significant number of languages in a wider area. Examples may include the word for specific commodities or goods (e.g., the curcuma/saffron word, from Ancient Indian *kuṅkumam*, Hittite *kunkuman*, Akkadian *kurkanû*, Greek κρόκος). The diffusion of these words usually followed trading routes. In the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age, most of these words that are attested both in the Ancient Near East and in the western languages of the Mediterranean also occur in the West Semitic languages of the Levant.

6. Back to Dark Age Syro-Anatolia

While the historical processes that led to the penetration of the Luwian elements in Northern Syria are well known, and the cultural quasi-continuity between the Ugaritic world and the Phoenician one yields a relatively plain model for the diachronic change of the geo-historical pattern of the Syro-Anatolian area, the origin of the Aramaean component and the relationship between the different main cultures requires description (see also Valk, this volume).

While scholars have argued that Aramaic was spoken in the second millennium BCE,[12] the origin of the Aramaean people as a significant demographic and political component of the Levant essentially coincides with the "Dark Age." At the same time, the temporal extension of the crisis is significantly shorter than has been pictured in literature. As outlined above in section two, we can date the core phase of the *military* crisis (both on the maritime and the Elamite front) to the decades between 1170 and the mid-1150s BCE. While we do not know much of the late 12th century BCE, the historical geography of the military campaigns of those kings who no longer qualify as Middle Assyrian and whom Liverani (1989) does not yet label as Neo-Assyrian properly, in particular Tiglath-pileser I,[13] strongly resembles that of the world known by the later Neo-Assyrian emperors (see Paci and Tenu, this volume; Marti, this volume). In Grayson's words:

> The reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BC) marks a new rise in Assyria's political and military fortunes, with Assyrian armies marching farther afield than ever before, from Babylonia in the south-east to Lebanon in the west. Not since the time of Tukulti-Ninurta I has there been such a powerful and influential monarch on the throne. These warlike achievements were accompanied, as usual in Assyria, by economic and cultural advances, and indeed the cultural transformations during Tiglath-pileser I's reign were both profound and prolonged, having permanent effect on Assyrian culture in the first millennium. (Grayson 1991, 5, RIMA 2)

While it is a fact that Tiglath-pileser's *exploits* are destined to remain unmatched for a little less than two centuries (but this may be due to ungenerous sources from the 1070s to the early 10th century BCE), the itineraries of the king's campaigns indicate that the political geography of Syro-Anatolia at the end of the 12th century BCE is very similar to the one that will be described in the annals of the Neo-Assyrian rulers from the 10th century BCE onwards.

7. Luwians, Aramaeans, and Phoenicians

While the historical changes that led to the collapse of the Late Bronze Age all occur in a rather short period of a few decades, the first "indigenous" pieces of information become available

12. Cf. for instance Creason (2008, 108ff.)
13. In particular, the annals RIMA 2 A.0.87: 1–4 and 12.

during the 11th century BCE (with the Luwian inscriptions, e.g., the Taita text from the Aleppo temple: Hawkins [2009; 2011]), with more documents from the 10th century BCE onwards.

This is not the place to discuss the correct interpretation of the evidence pertaining to the kingdom of Walistin/Palistin in the Orontes region (cf. Giusfredi [2018b] for some critical considerations); it is a fact that Luwian components were present in Syria during the so-called Dark Age, and their origin is historically unproblematic, given the obvious premise of the Hittite imperialistic expansion during the Final Bronze Age. Yet, if the diachronic issue is unproblematic, and clarifies the reasons for the survival of some religious, iconographic, political, and onomastic features that go back to the Hittite culture, the synchronic areal identity boundaries of the Iron Age Luwian kingdoms are worth examining.

A look at table 18.1 makes it clear that, while the Luwian epigraphic tradition of the Iron Age is very resilient against the penetration of the cuneiform writing system, the so-called Luwian identity of the first millennium is quite susceptible to contamination with the Semitic culture.

A symmetrical pattern of contamination is of course proper of the Aramaean kingdoms in the early centuries of the Iron Age (while later Aramaic will become a vernacular of the Assyrian Empire). Nevertheless, the origin of the Aramaean element is much less obvious than the one of the Luwian one.

Given the short duration of the phase that separates the alleged Bronze Age collapse from the annals by Tiglath-pileser I, who certainly mentions the Aramaeans as a type of *ahlamû*-nomads, it would be unreasonable to assume that the arrival of the Aramaeans in the Syro-Anatolian area and Levant was the result of a large migratory event. It is much more sensible to assume that the Aramaeans—if they are to be defined as speakers of Aramaic, a language that separates from Northwest Semitic by the sound change that turned a voiced interdental sound into an *ayn* (Huehnergard 1995, esp. 268)—were already settled in the area and that they acquired cultural and political preeminence with the decline of the former regional political infrastructures.

The strong convergence of the Luwian and Aramaean cultural traits, which in some cases involved local areas of linguistic grammatical interference, is reason enough to forfeit the concept of contamination and to adopt the common label of Syro-Anatolian culture to describe both components.

Still, there is a third element to account for: the Phoenician one. Here, the situation is different; the Phoenicians had a well-defined culture, which originated from and was centered in the coastal cities of the Levant. Still, the language and culture of the Phoenicians entered the Syro-Anatolian equation in a fashion that is not easily described.

Indeed, what we currently know is that Phoenician, as a language, was employed for monumental inscriptions in very different locations: in Sam'al, it was employed as a prestige code, in a fashion that would have been evident only to the elite. A commoner looking at the inscription KAI 24 (Kulamuwa's stela) would probably not have distinguished it from an Aramaic or Sam'alian text, because the writing system maintains the document within the boundaries of a Semitic "alphabetic" koine (cf. Amadasi Guzzo 2019). This phenomenon is not surprising, be-

Table 18.1. The areal and identity features in the Syro-Anatolian area during the early Iron Age

Feature	Identity factors	Areal factors
Writing	Anatolian Hieroglyphs (no trace of use of Cuneiform before the Assyrian conquest)	Coexistence with alphabetic systems (Zincirli, Tell Ahmar, etc.)
Onomastics	Luwian names, residual Hurrian names, names of Hittite tradition	Rulers with Semitic names dictating Luwian texts (Tell Ahmar)
Political lexicon	Traditional "Hittite" titles	New titles, some of which possibly shared in the larger eastern Mediterranean (e.g., *tar(ra)wani-**)
Iconography	Survival of Anatolian styles	The same styles emerge in epigraphically Luwian and in epigraphically Semitic kingdoms
Language (Grammar)	Iron Age Luwian is a continuation of Empire Luwian (Yakubovich 2010, 68–73)	Grammatical interference with Semitic in Sam'al (the situation in Cilicia is unclear)**
Language (Lexicon)	Presence of Hittite historical loans is negligible	Semitic loans

*. Cf. Pintore (1979) and Giusfredi (2009) on the areal relationship of the title; Melchert (2019), for a successful etymology.

**. On Sam'al, cf. Giusfredi and Pisaniello (2021), with extensive references to previous scholarship. On Cilicia, Yakubovich (2015); Simon (2018).

cause on the one hand the identity-forming momentum of writing is much stronger than that of language (languages mix much more easily than writing systems) and on the other hand the importance of Phoenician as a prestigious idiom transcends the alphabetic world and enters the wider Syro-Anatolian one, as testified by Yar(i)ri's (a regent ruler of Karkemiš) statement, according to which he mastered the languages of *Asur*(*a*) (Aššur) *Sur*(*a*) (Tyre) and *Taima* (if this is Taymāʾ, this *might* be Aramaic).[14]

But if Phoenician, as a language, must have—for historically obscure reasons—acted as a prestige language in the westernmost parts of the Syro-Mesopotamian cultural continuum, the diffusion of documents is not limited to the Syro-Anatolian areas of the Levant. The existence of Phoenician-Luwian bilinguals in Cilicia is well known (Karatepe, Çineköy), with cases attested in Rough Cilicia (as in the case of the Cebel Iris text, a Phoenician inscription containing several non-Semitic names, some of which are certainly Luwian: e.g., Mosca and Russell [1987]; Bordreuil [2019]).

In general, the use of Phoenician in Cilicia has been consistently linked with the idea of a presence of Cypriot Greek colonists on the coasts, rather than with a presence and diffusion of

14. Karkemiš A15b, §§19–20. Text: zú+ra/i-wa/i-ni-ti(URBS) | SCRIBA-li-ia-ti-i a-sú+ra/i(REGIO)-wa/i-na-ti(URBS) | SCRIBA-li-ia-ti-i ta-i-ma-ni-ti-ha(URBS) SCRIBA-li-ti 12-ha-wa/i-' | "LINGUA"-la-ti-i-na (LITUUS) u-ni-ha ("The language/script of Tyre, the language/script of Aššur, the language/script of Taima, 12 languages I knew.") Note that "Tyrian" appears to be one of the languages mentioned explicitly, and that it is mentioned before Akkadian in the list.

Phoenician people in the first place. These sort of assumptions are mostly based on the mention, in the Luwian-Phoenician inscriptions of the area, of the personal name *mu-ka-sa-*/*mpš*, which most scholars conclude equates with mythological Greek hero Mopsos (and, occasionally, with a Greek interpretation of the name of the kings Awariku- and Warika-, belonging to the same royal house).[15] Examining the linguistic details of this correspondence is beyond the scope of the present work (and it is an approach to the problem that I consider often misleading, as phonetic adaptation is not one of the aspects of linguistics one can predict). Nevertheless, it should be noticed that even if the Mopsos and Awarikus connections were to be taken seriously, nothing indicates that these would point to a Greek penetration. Mopsos is an Asian character (the Asian counterpart of Calchas, in the very polarized *topos* of the challenge of the two diviners, as summarized by Strabo in Book 15 of his *Geography*). Thus, the connection could work much better in reverse: we shall not fall in the trap of trying to reconstruct a Greek dynasty in Cilicia, but we will simply note the possibility that the anthroponyms Mopsos and Awarikus in the Cilician texts *may be related* to those of Asian figures (Mopsos and his father, Rhakios) that entered the Greek myths from Asia Minor.

This would imply that the presence of the Phoenician element in Cilicia would be not just linguistic, but also demographic, a result that is consistent with the large diffusion. After all, the geographically peripheral inscription of Cebel Iris, to mention an important and understudied piece of evidence, is a boundary text referring to land grants, therefore it has a legal value, which shows that the use of Phoenician in the area is not limited to prestigious monumental inscriptions.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have tried to do two things. Firstly, I tried to describe the merits and the limits of a careful combination of the different methodologies of historical and linguistic analyses by reconsidering the correlations between different kinds of data pertaining to a single historical object (specifically, of a culture).

Secondly, I tried to analyze some features of the very complex cultural area of Syro-Anatolia around the historical singularity represented by the transition from the Bronze to Iron Ages, by examining the relationship between the main cultural components, and by concluding that the fluid coexistence of originally heterogeneous elements should not be modelled as a system based on different peoples with occasional local contaminations, but rather as a complex mixed culture. This attitude produces a more accurate and flexible description, and, at the same time, it helps avoid the traps of biased descriptions that risk overemphasizing one element and neglecting the historical, cultural, and linguistic relevance of another.

15. Cf. Simon (2018) for a useful overview (the author's dismissal of the Rhakios hypothesis is, however, a bit too hasty, not because the identification is correct, but because no discussion of the historical implications is offered—Rhakios is the name of Mopsos's father—and the reasons why the "Etymologie" is "verfehlt" are not explained). See also Novák and Fuchs (2021).

Addendum

After this article was completed and submitted in late 2019, J. Osborne's *The Syro-Anatolian City-States: An Iron Age Culture* was published. Osborne's book contains a very articulate and fine-grained model for the description of the Syro-Anatolian culture, which is, in my opinion, generally compatible with the sociolinguistic and historical description I sketched in this contribution of mine.

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