

# THE LATE BRONZE AGE

A BASIC OVERVIEW—PROVISIONAL

## I. MESOPOTAMIA

- A. Kassites of Babylon dominated beginning of period
- B. Assyria emerges at end of Bronze Age

## II. EGYPT: The New Kingdom (see separate outline notes)

## III. HITTITE EMPIRE

- A. Dominated Anatolia and Northern Syria
- B. Assyria emerges at end of Bronze Age

## IV. GREECE AND THE AEGEAN

- A. **Minoan Domination** (until about 1400)
  - 1. non-Greek “Palace” culture, based in Aegean islands
  - 2. “type site” = **Knossos**, legendary home of King Minos
  - 3. dominated Aegean until around 1400
  - 4. **Akrotiri** (city) on island of **Thera** destroyed by volcanic eruption; source of Atlantis legend?
- B. **Mycenaean Period** (about 1400-1200)
  - 1. Bronze Age Greeks; spoke/wrote early form of Greek; also a “Palace” culture
  - 2. “type site” = **Mycenae**, legendary home of King Agamemnon, leader of Achaeans in Trojan War
  - 3. the **Trojan War**, about 1250-1230 BC, known from Homer (about 700 BC): *Iliad* (and *Odyssey*)
    - a. a legendary story told in traditional later texts, parallels historical problems with the Bible
    - b. cannot be proved, but *could* have occurred, largely as described, given knowledge of the period
    - c. cultural allusions in Homer and excavations provide plausibility
  - 4. Mycenaean palace/citadels destroyed/abandoned about 1200, except Tiryns (lasts into 12<sup>th</sup> century)

## V. CANAANITES

## VI. THE END OF THE LATE BRONZE AGE

- A. Dissolution of Aegean world (following Trojan War?)
  - 1. collapse of Mycenaean palace culture about 1200
  - 2. “Sea Peoples” groups apparently migrate away from Aegean region (see below)
  - 3. perhaps reflected in fate of Mycenaean heroes in *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, other Greek legends
- B. Fall of Hittite Empire about 1200 BC
  - 1. Peace with Egypt under Rameses II; troubles elsewhere
  - 2. troubles in west; perhaps reflected in Trojan War
  - 3. capital **Hattusas** destroyed right at 1200 (by Sea Peoples?)
- C. The Sea Peoples
  - 1. several groups of apparent Aegean (Greece, islands, western Anatolia) origin appear in Egyptian records
  - 2. they appear as enemies/invasors of Egypt during the reign of Merneptah and Rameses III
  - 3. migrated away from Aegean around 1200