



INTRODUCTION

This book presents a synthesis of the Prehistory of Asia Minor between about 20,000 and 2000 BC.¹ It discusses the transformations of human societies in Asia Minor from small-scale groups engaged in hunting and gathering to complex, hierarchically organised communities with an economy based on agriculture and industry.

The land of Asia Minor sits at a critical junction between the continents of Europe and Asia. For this reason, it has often been seen as a land-bridge through which cultural developments were transmitted. In this book it will be argued, however, that Asia Minor is better understood as a land in which cultural developments followed a distinctive trajectory from as early as 9000 BC. In this regard, the term 'Asia Minor', which implies that we are dealing with a small continent, captures an essential characteristic of this territory.

There are two main motives for investigating the Prehistory of Asia Minor. The first is that an understanding of developments in Asia Minor is of key importance in the study of wider developments in the Prehistory of Eurasia. For example, Asia Minor plays an important role both in the Neolithic transition and in the emergence of metallurgy, developments that have ramifications far beyond Asia Minor. Second, the Prehistory of Asia Minor is a subject worthy of study in its own right. Many phenomena in the Prehistory of Asia Minor are without parallels anywhere, and their study will contribute both to a fuller understanding of the human past in all its diversity and to a fuller appreciation of why things happened the way they did in the Prehistory of Asia Minor. I would argue that these two motives

¹ Throughout this book, BC dates are normally used. In older publications BP dates are often encountered, but given the recent extensions of radiocarbon calibration curves, it makes more sense to use BC dates. Wherever possible, the chronology is based on calibrated radiocarbon dates. In a few cases where individual radiocarbon dates are mentioned, they are written as 'cal. BC' in order to avoid confusion.

for investigating the Prehistory of Asia Minor are complementary. Both start from the premise that the Prehistory of Asia Minor should be contextualised within the wider discipline of archaeology and the issues of general anthropological significance it aims to address.

One of the reasons for conceiving this book, in May 2007, is that those who wanted to study the Prehistory of Asia Minor faced a difficult challenge. Despite the fact that a large number of prehistoric excavations are carried out each year in Asia Minor, and that a series of journals are devoted to Turkish archaeology,² there were very few synthetic studies of the Prehistory of Asia Minor, and those that did exist were inadequate for various reasons. First, a number of studies of the Prehistory of the Near East were published in the 1970s and are now out of date.³ Second, there were some more recent edited volumes with papers on the Prehistory of Asia Minor that by default do not provide a synthetic overview.⁴ Third, there were a number of publications by Yakar dealing with the Prehistory of Turkey,⁵ which, although a valuable resource, are out of date and present a site-by-site summary of the evidence rather than a synthetic overview. Fourth, Joukowsky's book *Early Turkey*⁶ provided an overview but is too general in its treatment of the specific periods and sites to be of much use.

Three years later, at the completion of this work, this situation has changed dramatically. Sagona and Zimansky have very recently published a monograph on the archaeology of Turkey.⁷ Another book on the Early Bronze Age of Turkey is due to appear in 2011.⁸ Finally, an edited volume about Anatolian archaeology is in preparation (Steadman and McMahon personal communication 2009). Thus, there is no longer a lack of synthetic literature on the Prehistory of Asia Minor, and the archaeology of Turkey can finally be compared with that of adjacent regions. Examples that can be mentioned are monographs on regions such as the Balkans, Greece, Cyprus, and Syria.⁹

Nonetheless, the present book constitutes an important addition to the growing literature on the archaeology of Asia Minor. It is more specific in regional and temporal focus than the book by Sagona and Zimansky, which makes it possible to treat data and research problems in depth. At

² The most important journals are *Adalya*, *Anatolia Antiqua*, *Anatolica*, *Anatolian Studies*, *Belleten*, *Istanbul Mitteilungen*, *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, and *Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi – Arkeoloji Dergisi*.

³ Mellaart 1975; Singh 1976; Redman 1978.

⁴ Özdoğan and Başgelen 1999, 2007; Gérard and Thissen 2002; Lichter 2005; Gatsov and Schwartzberg 2006.

⁵ Yakar 1985, 1991, 1994.

⁶ Joukowsky 1996.

⁷ Sagona and Zimansky 2009.

⁸ Bachhuber 2011.

⁹ Bailey 2000; Perlès 2001; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003; Steel 2004.

the same time, the diachronic discussion of about 18,000 years of occupation hopefully captures some of the most important transformations in human history as they played out in Asia Minor. For such a comprehensive view, a monograph is more suitable than an edited volume.

Research into the Prehistory of Asia Minor has been uneven: Some areas and periods have been poorly investigated, while others are much better known. Further, many excavations and surveys have not been adequately published. Consequently, the synthesis presented in this volume is centred on a limited group of excavated sites for which comprehensive publications are available, although efforts are made to include evidence from recent excavations and sites for which we lack substantial publications.

This book differs in conception from the older publications dealing with the Prehistory of Asia Minor. Rather than presenting a series of sites and their sequences, the aim is to discuss archaeological horizons in a synthetic manner and address socio-cultural developments and relations with surrounding regions where appropriate. In so far as these elements are central to this book, the approach is comparable to that taken by Redman in his *The Emergence of Civilization*¹⁰ and by more recent books on the Prehistory of Egypt and the Balkans.¹¹ However, unlike these books, my approach here is not programmatic: It is neither neo-evolutionist in outlook nor agency centred. Instead, I draw on ideas from the broad field of the humanities in a much more eclectic fashion. Throughout the book, the aim will be to ground the synthesis in the available data and, where possible, to formulate interpretations in such a way that they can be evaluated in future research.

This book, then, has three aims. The first is to provide a synthetic overview of the Prehistory of Asia Minor that is both thorough and up-to-date. The second is to address issues of general anthropological significance in relation to the unique trajectories of development and phenomena that constitute the Prehistory of Asia Minor and how these bear on wider debates in the discipline of archaeology. The third is to contextualise the Prehistory of Asia Minor within the wider Prehistory of adjacent regions and to assess the nature and importance of contacts between regions.

¹⁰ Redman 1978.

¹¹ Bailey 2000; Wengrow 2006.



CHAPTER ONE

THE LAND OF ASIA MINOR

‘Asia Minor’ in this book refers to what today is roughly the western half of Turkey-in-Asia, or ‘Anatolia’ (Fig. 1.1). Asia Minor consists of a peninsula surrounded by the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara to the north, the Aegean to the west, and the Mediterranean to the south, and does not include what is presently the easternmost mountainous part of Turkey.

The term ‘Asia Minor’ developed as a variant of the word ‘Asia’. Over the course of millennia, Asia has expanded from a designation for a region in Aegean Turkey to the designation of a significant part of the globe. The word Asia is first documented in Hittite texts, which mention a coalition of small states called ‘Assuwa’ in western Turkey. Subsequently, a Roman province with the name Asia existed in the same region.¹ Later, Asia was used to refer to all of the Near East, and subsequently expanded to include the entire Asian continent as presently defined. The term Asia Minor came into use to identify the western half of Asiatic Turkey more specifically from about 400 AD, and was mainly used by the Byzantines to describe the part of Asia under their control.²

The division between Asia Minor and the rest of the Near East runs along a line approximately connecting the modern towns of Iskenderun and Trabzon (Fig. 1.1). In terms of geography this boundary is not clear-cut, and there is a gradual transition rather than a sharp break. Generally speaking, we are dealing with the division between the Anatolian Plateau to the west, which consists of a wide variety of landscapes at an altitude of about 1000 metres above sea level, and the mountainous highlands to the east. In the south, the coastal plains of Cilicia and Iskenderun are included in Asia Minor, and here the Amanus Mountains mark the separation with the Syrian steppe and the Levant.

¹ Cline 1996; Bryce 2005: 124–127.

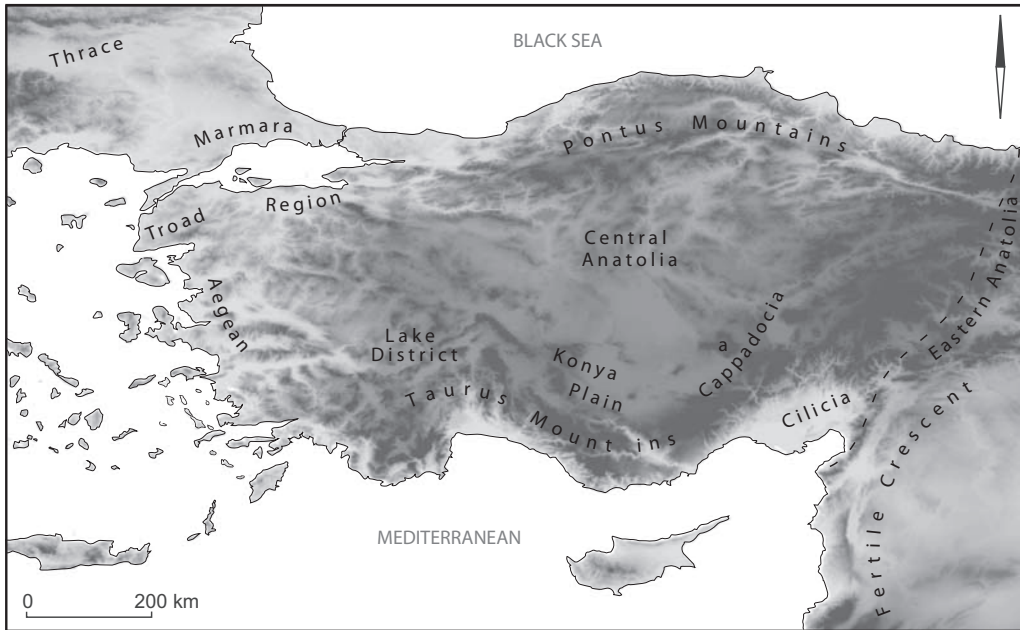
² Hütteroth 1982: 14.

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Excerpt

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The rationale for adopting the term Asia Minor as central to this book – and by extension the validity of its eastern boundary – is not based primarily on geography, however. Rather, this geographic boundary is relevant to the present study because time and again throughout Prehistory and later periods it constituted an important cultural division between three regions: first, Greater Mesopotamia and the Levant to the south (including Syria and south-eastern Turkey); second, the mountainous highlands to the east where the Taurus, Pontus, Caucasus, Zagros, and Elburz mountain ranges merge; and, third, Asia Minor.

It will be argued in this volume that this cultural boundary existed from about 9000 BC onwards, starting in the Aceramic Neolithic, and continued to exist through the Ceramic Neolithic and Chalcolithic.³ Subsequently, in the Bronze Ages, there were closer cultural links between the regions mentioned, although in many ways Asia Minor remained distinct in its developments.⁴ The same situation continued in the subsequent Iron Age. The cultural division along the eastern boundary of Asia Minor was overcome during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, only to be gradually reasserted in the Byzantine and Ottoman periods.⁵ Thus, although there are protracted periods during which strong states managed to unify culture

1.1 Geography and toponyms of Asia Minor. Produced by the author and Joanne Porck.

³ Yakar 1991; Özdoğan 1996; Thissen 2000.

⁴ Efe 2006, 15.

⁵ Hütteroth 1982: 14; Yakar 1985; Kozłowski and Aurenche 2005: 88–95.

across the eastern boundary of Asia Minor in later history, this was not the case during most of Anatolian prehistory.

These observations do not amount to geographical determinism. Geography does not structure human interaction and define cultural groups. Instead, cultural practices have an important role to play. For example, regular contacts between Asia Minor and the Fertile Crescent can be firmly documented in the Aceramic Neolithic, but these contacts did not result in the transference of culture in the sense that people took up culturally specific practices from societies on the other side of the mountains. By contrast, during the Early Bronze Age, the desire of elite groups in Asia Minor to set themselves apart from others resulted in a desire for exotic goods and styles that transcended pre-existing cultural and political boundaries and led to the formation of an interregional elite culture.

The boundaries of Asia Minor in directions other than the east are more straightforward in terms of geography. Asia Minor is surrounded by sea to the south, west, and north. Nonetheless, these boundaries are in some cases more permeable than the less self-evident eastern limit of Asia Minor. In the south, contacts between Asia Minor and Cyprus existed throughout Prehistory. In the west, Aegean Turkey constituted a landscape often more integrated with the Aegean islands and Greece than with the central plateau of Asia Minor. Finally, in the northwest, the region surrounding the Sea of Marmara often constituted a cultural whole, which in some periods was affiliated with Thrace rather than with the rest of Asia Minor.

Ultimately, any division of the globe into sub-regions is arbitrary. Nevertheless, I feel that the focus on Asia Minor in this book is appropriate for two reasons. First, handbooks for adjacent regions such as Cyprus, Greece, and the Balkans already exist.⁶ Second, there are many periods in which Asia Minor does seem to constitute a coherent cultural entity that can be distinguished from that of adjacent areas.

1.1.1 The Structure of Asia Minor

Asia Minor is a large territory of about 407,700 square kilometres, and is approximately similar in size to Germany and The Netherlands combined. Given this substantial size, it is not surprising that Asia Minor includes a large variety of landscapes. The following description of its main geographical characteristics consists of little more than a sketch. More detailed studies of the geography of Asia Minor are available in other publications.⁷

⁶ Dickinson 1994; Bailey 2000; Perlès 2001; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003; Steel 2004.

⁷ Dewdney 1971; Brinkmann 1976; Hütteroth 1982; Erol 1983; Metz 1996.

On a structural level Asia Minor consists of two large east–west-oriented mountain ranges, the Pontus in the north and the Taurus in the south, that are most formidable in the east and gradually decrease in height towards the west of Asia Minor. To the east of Asia Minor, these mountain ranges merge with those of the Caucasus, Zagros, and Elburz in a large, mountainous highland zone.⁸

In the north, the Pontus Mountains rise steeply out of the Black Sea, with only a few narrow coastal plains. At a few places, rivers from the central plateau break through the Pontus Mountains and have created large alluvial fans on which large-scale agriculture is possible. The most important of these are at Çarşamba and Bafra near modern Samsun. Even today the Pontus Mountains are difficult to breach from the interior, and there are few roads connecting the coast with the hinterland, a pattern that was undoubtedly more pronounced in the past.

To the south of the Pontus Mountains runs the North Anatolian Fault, which can be traced roughly from Erzincan in the east to Izmit in the west. The Anatolian plate south of the fault is pushed west between 1 and 20 centimetres per annum in relation to the Eurasian plate to the north. The enormous pressure that builds up along this fault zone resulted in no less than seven earthquakes with a force above 7.0 on the Richter scale between 1939 and 1999. Apart from this major fault system there are many other fault zones in Asia Minor, as a result of which up to 40 per cent of Turkey is periodically subject to substantial earthquakes.⁹

In the south, Asia Minor is dominated by the Taurus range, running from mountainous eastern Turkey to the region west of Antalya. At both ends the Taurus Mountains reach elevations above 2000 metres above sea level, and like the Pontus, the mountains rise abruptly from the sea. Exceptions are the coastal plains of Antalya, Cilicia, and Iskenderun, and these plains are difficult to reach from the interior. Only a few natural roads cross the Taurus, and these have had great cultural, commercial, and military significance throughout much of history. These are the Göksu River Valley in western Cilicia, the ‘Cilician Gates’ near Tarsus, and a pass through the Amanus Mountains known as the ‘Syrian Gates’.

Set between the mountains of eastern Turkey, the Pontus, and the Taurus are the highlands of Asia Minor, better known as ‘Central Anatolia’. These highlands are often described as a ‘plateau’, but they are neither homogeneous nor level. Instead, we are dealing with diverse landscapes at about 1,000 metres above sea level, which include, first, rugged mountainous terrain interspersed with river valleys – most prevalent in the north

⁸ See İlhan 1971a for more details on the structural features of Turkey.

⁹ İlhan 1971b; Yılmaz 2003.

and east; second, large basins in which water drains into large, shallow salt lakes – in particular the Tüz Gölü Basin, the Konya Plain, the Ereğli Basin, and the Seyfe Göl Basin; and, third, the Lakes Region in the south-west between Konya and Denizli.

In the west, the highlands of Asia Minor gradually give way to a series of east–west-oriented river valleys separated by minor mountain chains. The most important are the Gediz and Büyük Menderes river valleys, which form natural roads connecting the interior with the Aegean. Human settlements have clustered in these river valleys throughout most periods in both Prehistory and later periods. In the valleys, a significant amount of alluviation has taken place over the millennia; as a result, prehistoric coastlines and surfaces have by and large been buried under later alluvium.

Finally, along the coasts of the Sea of Marmara in the northwest of Asia Minor another region can be distinguished, with large plains around Bandırma and Adapazarı, and a number of medium-sized lakes, such as Kuş Gölü, Ulubat Gölü, and İznik Gölü.

1.1.2 Natural Resources of Asia Minor

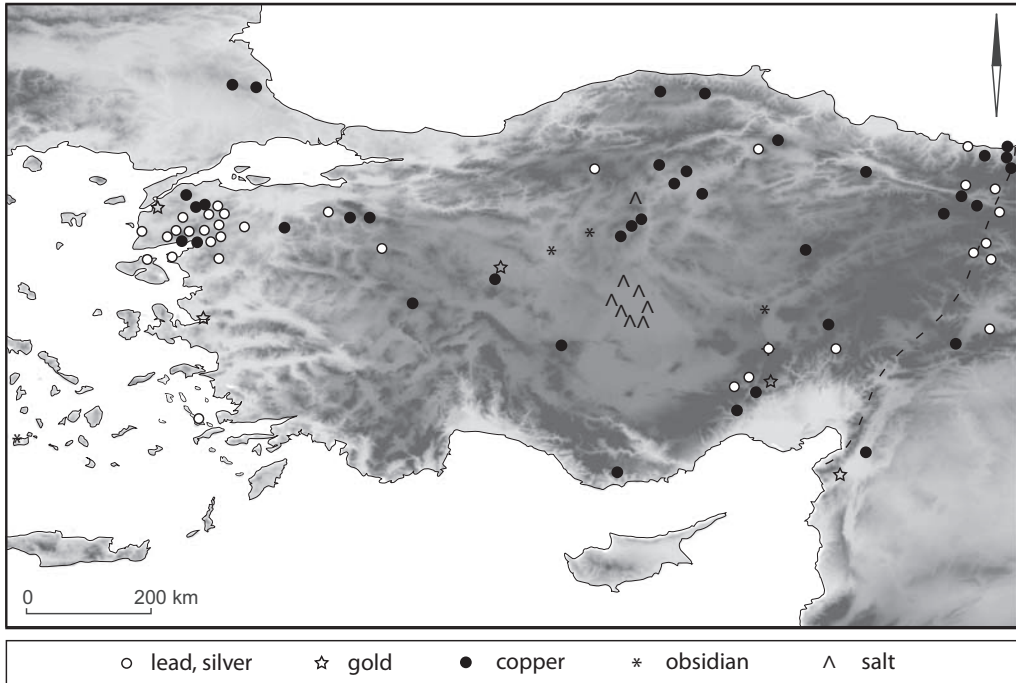
The geology of Asia Minor is complex because several continental plates come together in various folding zones. Related to these folding zones are landscapes formed by volcanism¹⁰ and numerous mountain chains exposing rock formations of great diversity. Consequently, a large variety of minerals and rocks are present in Asia Minor. Many of these have been exploited in Prehistory, only the most important of which will be mentioned here (Fig. 1.2).¹¹

The first of these is obsidian, a volcanic glass that was mined and exchanged from the Epipalaeolithic onwards. Two source areas in Asia Minor were exploited in Prehistory, one centred on the Cappadocian relict volcanoes and another on the Galatian volcanic massif, located in North-Central Anatolia (§4.3.1). Both regions contain a number of obsidian sources, which can be distinguished chemically from each other. Several obsidian quarries have been investigated, and it is often possible to trace the material from such quarries to far-removed sites and to date the use of these quarries to specific periods in Prehistory. Obsidian from the Aegean island of Melos is also found in Asia Minor during Prehistory.¹²

¹⁰ For more details on the geology of Turkey see İlhan 1971a; Brinkmann 1976; Erol 1983.

¹¹ For details on rocks and minerals of economic value see Karajian 1920; De Jesus 1980; Yener et al. 1994; Schoop 1995.

¹² Keller and Seifried 1990; Williams-Thorpe 1995; Balkan-Atlı et al. 1999a; Georgiadis 2008.



Second, copper ores are available in abundance in Anatolia, and many appear to have been exploited during Prehistory. The earliest copper artefacts are found in Aceramic Neolithic sites, but copper consumption became much more prolific with the rise of metallurgy during the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age. Although it is often difficult to date ancient mines, it has been argued that important copper mines were located in the Trabzon Region, in North-Central Anatolia, in the Küre Mountains of the central Pontus, and in the Bolkardağ Region.¹³ A number of wooden objects have been found in Anatolian mines – such as a wooden ladder and a shovel – that can be dated to the third, second, and first millennia BC, demonstrating that mining has a considerable, and largely undocumented, Prehistory in Asia Minor.¹⁴

Third, most of the other metals that were mined in Asia Minor during Prehistory, such as lead, silver, and gold, often came from the same general areas as copper. There is also a notable occurrence of gold in the central Aegean part of Asia Minor, which is reflected in the Greek myth of the golden touch of King Midas of Lydia in the Iron Age. Arsenic can be found

1.2 Rocks and minerals of Asia Minor. Produced by the author and Joanne Porck.

¹³ De Jesus 1980; Kaptan 1986; Yener et al. 1994; Schoop 1995.

¹⁴ De Jesus 1980: 110; Kaptan 1986.

across Asia Minor, a circumstance that was of some importance for the production of early copper alloys.¹⁵

Fourth, there are a number of ores that occur in Asia Minor, but for which it has not been unequivocally demonstrated that they were mined during Prehistory. Iron objects are found from the Early Bronze Age onwards, but it is possible that the origins of this material were almost exclusively meteoric.¹⁶ Further, the debate about whether tin was mined at Göltepe-Kestel is still unresolved and will be discussed at some length in Chapter 7.¹⁷

Finally, a resource of great importance in Prehistory that was obtained from specific places in the landscapes and exchanged over long distances is salt. Especially well known are salt mining and production at the Tüz Gölü¹⁸ and at the rock salt sources located between the town of Çankırı and the Kızılırmak.¹⁹

1.2.1 The Ecology of Asia Minor

Asia Minor has four main climates/ecological zones that are largely shaped by the geographical features of the country.²⁰ Precipitation is highest along the Black Sea littoral, where annual precipitation in many parts exceeds 1,000 millimetres. Precipitation occurs in all seasons, and both summers and winters are temperate, with average summer temperatures of about 25°C, winter averages of about 10°C, and about four frost-days per annum.

Along the western and southern littorals of Asia Minor, the climate is Mediterranean. Although the precipitation can equal that of the Pontus, exceeding 1000 millimetres per year in many areas, rainfall is almost absent during the summer. Winter temperatures average about 11°C, and frost occurs one to three days per annum. Summers are hot, with temperatures averaging around 27 to 33°C. In general, the climate becomes warmer as one moves south and east along the Turkish coast.

The climate of the Marmara Region is intermediate between those of the Pontus and the Mediterranean. Precipitation is about 800 millimetres per annum and occurs in all seasons, although summers are relatively dry. Summers are milder than in the Mediterranean, with average temperatures

¹⁵ De Jesus 1980; Yener et al. 1994; Schoop 1995.

¹⁶ Yener et al. 1994: 383; Pernicka 2006.

¹⁷ Yener and Özbal 1987; Hall and Steadman 1991; Pernicka et al. 1992; Willies 1992; Yener and Goodway 1992; Muhly 1993; Yener and Vandiver 1993a, 1993b; Kaptan 1995; Yener 2000.

¹⁸ Erdoğu et al. 2003a; Erdoğu and Kayacan 2004; Erdoğu and Fazlıoğlu 2006.

¹⁹ Taşman 1937.

²⁰ For more details see Steinhauer 1970; Alex 1985; Van Zeist and Bottema 1991.