

## THE ANATOLIAN URBAN MODEL BASED ON THE DEBATE OVER TROIA VI

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, the historian of ancient civilizations, Frank Kolb, started a debate about Troy VI, dating back to the Late Bronze Age. Besides questioning the claim of Korfmann that Troy VI was the commercial center and political capital of Late Bronze Age Anatolia, Kolb also put up for discussion the urban character of the settlement and accused Korfmann of exaggerating the importance of the location from all aspects. According to Kolb, Troy VI was never a significant commercial center of its era and never exhibited urban features. This article aims to question Kolb's argument that the Troy VI settlement did not exhibit urban characteristics on the basis of the urban parameters Kolb has set forth as well as by using new urban hypotheses and the Anatolian urban model.

**Keywords:** Troia VI, Anatolian Urban Model, Urbanism, Urban Theories.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the historian and scholar of ancient civilizations Frank Kolb started a controversy about structural Troy VI dated to the Late Bronze Age. Besides questioning the claim of Korfmann that Troy VI was the commercial center and political capital of Late Bronze Age Anatolia, Kolb also put up for discussion the urban character of the settlement and accused Korfmann of exaggerating the importance of the location from all aspects. According to Kolb, Troy VI never exhibited urban features. [1]

Kolb's first objection regarded Korfmann's argument about the dimensions and demographic density of the settlement. Basing his view on new research, Korfmann asserted that the Troy VI citadel had a lower town that stretched out toward the south along an area of about 25-30 hectares that was surrounded by strong, developed, monumental city wall systems and harbored a population of 10,000. Kolb however maintained that the existence of a lower town of such expanse had not been archaeologically evidenced and that the settlement was in fact much smaller, with a population that was not as large as claimed, explaining that the assertion was only a hypothesis. [2]

The second point Kolb criticized was the economic structure of Troy VI. Korfmann had claimed that Troy VI was an important commercial center of strategic significance for the areas of the Aegean, Anatolia, the Balkans and Black Sea. [3] Korfmann said that Troy's commercial artifacts exhibited a very rich profile which evidenced that there was widespread trade of fish swimming down from the Dardanelles, horses originating from the steppes in the Northern Black Sea and mountainous Anatolian regions, amber from the Baltics, onyx from Colchis and

Crimea, copper from northern Anatolia, the Balkans and/or Central Asia, gold from Troy or Colchis, tin from Bohemia or Central Asia, iron from the northeastern Anatolian coasts, Canaanite amphoras and slaves from Syria-Palestine. [4] Kolb retorted that this claim of Korfmann's was unfounded since there was no archeological data that supported the view that the settlement was such a densely populated, expansive, widespread commercial center addressing an international trade network. Kolb objected by saying that Korfmann had only set forth an estimated hypothesis. [5] Contrary to Korfmann's view that Troy VI was a commercial port with an expansive trading network, Kolb made the claim that according to Blegen's statistics, most of the Troy VI finds consisted of counterweights and spindle whorls and that the settlement's economy was based on agriculture, cattle/horse breeding and weaving. For this reason, he argued, the objects dealt with for export in the settlement were most likely to be cattle, horses and woven textiles/fabrics. [6] He added that the transport to the Black Sea, the Balkans and the of such large quantities of massive, heavy animals in herds appeared to be rather difficult and was therefore disputable. [7] Kolb maintained that the settlement did not carry the characteristics of superior and diverse economic specialization or a class of professional artisans in different branches. He said that what was certain was that it was instead another product, namely woven goods, that was manufactured at high quality for trade beyond individual needs and that the Trojan Gray Ware, Tan Ware and locally produced Mycenaean-style pottery were produced for domestic consumption, thus further refuting the claims set forth by Korfmann. [8]

Kolb also argued that in terms of architecture, the settlement did not have the spatial differences required by a citadel with a commercial function as Korfmann claimed, and to clarify the features that were needed by a trading settlement, he compared the citadel with Ugarit. [9] The researcher stated that the settlement of Ugarit displayed a cosmopolitan character that pointed to ostentatious elite houses, merchant abodes, libraries, archives and developed city planning that indicated a structural fiber that reflected the hierarchy of its dwellers, including a 90-room occupying a considerably large area of 120x85 m and a rich archive of documents that was monumental in appearance as well as a public or administrative area consisting of a palace and 4 temples.

Kolb furthermore asserted that another variable that needed to be in such a settlement, the function of administration, was also nonexistent in Troy VI, criticizing Korfmann at this point for his misleading definition of the structures in the citadel. Korfmann had pointed to the spectacular architecture and well-developed city planning and the gates, buttresses and bastions and city walls reinforced with saw-toothed systems that Troy VI possessed that were so typically Anatolian, stating that the citadel had exclusive homes revealing different plans as well as a palace structure in the center, at the highest point of the settlement. [10] Kolb however maintains that what was identified as a palace was only an imaginary reconstruction and that, instead of displaying a number and diversity of administrative units that would indicate different public activity and economic and administration management, the citadel was made up of nothing more than a collection of aristocratic houses [11] and did not exhibit an administrative class on a city scale.

Another factor that Kolb pointed to in accusing Korfmann of exaggerating the importance and qualities of the citadel of Troy VI was the absence of written documents in the settlement.

According to Kolb, if Troy VI had been a significant commercial center or an important city of its era as Korfmann asserted, theoretically such a settlement would evidence high-level specialization and also, if the scale of commerce was as intense and internationally widespread as Korfmann maintained, the city would also show indications of a class of artisans and a system of commercial accounting that would have required writing or a system of signs, symbols and stamps that was used in place of writing. As examples, Kolb offers the wide range of written documents in the cities of the Near East, in Ugarit and in Kuşaklı-Sarissa, Karahöyük and Acemhöyük in Anatolia [12]

## **2. KOLB'S CRITERIA**

The emergence of city life is one of the most important breaking points of the history of civilization and has been a subject that has been examined in all its dimensions throughout history by researchers of varying disciplines. Many hypotheses on the development of cities have resulted from the discussion of how cities are born and the dynamics of what differentiates villages from cities. The most well-known of these theories, Gordon Childe's eclectic list of a 10-point model he derived from his review of ancient Mesopotamian cities, has been pivotal in all discussions of urbanization despite its being so widely criticized. In his article, *The Urban Revolution*, which was published in 1950, Childe seeks answers to the question of what distinguished the first cities from then existing villages. Childe lists 10 criteria based on his study of the cities of ancient Mesopotamia. These criteria are cited as: the size of the settlement and density of population; the existence of a class of full-time specialist craftsmen and products; the presence of monumental buildings such as temples or palaces; an administrative class; writing or a system of signs and symbols that could take its place; developed techniques of geometry and astronomy; long-distance foreign trade; a standardized artistic style; and a political organization on the level of a state. [13]

In the book titled *Die Stadt im Altertum* he wrote in 1984, Frank Kolb queried the phenomenon of urbanization, investigating urban dynamics and the factors leading to the emergence of cities in the context of Near Eastern, archaic and classical era city settlements. It is seen in this piece of research that the author follows in the footsteps of classical urban theories. [14] When setting forth his objections about Troy VI, Kolb uses the same methods in his interpretation of defining the traditional urban parameters of the settlement. Based on these factors, in order for a settlement to fit into the classification of a type of city, it must first possess a certain size and population density that may be considered the reflection of the physical morphology of a city. These criteria have their foundation in the large-scale settlements of the Near East and according to this perspective, settlements that are less than the defined size cannot be considered cities. Kolb thus claims that Troy VI in reality does not possess an expansive lower city as Korfmann maintains and therefore cannot be considered a city first and foremost because its dimensions and demographic density do not qualify the settlement to be a city.

It can be seen that in his criticism of Troy VI being set forth as a commercial city, Kolb is still under the influence of a classical perspective. Besides using archeological data to defend his assertion that the settlement did not have a great volume of commercial activity as Korfmann theorized, the researcher also offers the explanation that the settlement could not have been a commercial hub due to its spatial characteristics. In his view, a commercial city would contain temples or

other monumental structures and archives with a wealth of documents that indicated some sort of complex administrative system that was a part of a larger organized arrangement. [15] It would also need to possess elite residences that displayed class differences as well as heterogeneous urban planning that comprised merchant dwellings. With this definition, Kolb clearly appears to reflect upon the Near East city model and the traditional hypotheses to which he subscribes.

The researcher inquires into the administrative function of the settlement and by the same token, claims that a city should possess a rich number and diversity of public buildings exhibiting administrative power in its acropolis that point to, as in the cities of the Near East, public activity as well as economic and administrative management. He asserts that to the contrary, Troy VI only exhibits exclusive habitats, a feature that is not in harmony with the concept of an urban settlement. By setting forth writing as a prerequisite to an urban settlement, Kolb reveals how loyal he is to past trends of interpretation. Kolb defends the belief that in order for artisans and the merchant class to conduct their economic activities in a large-scale commercial center or urban settlement, there must have been evidence of writing or a defined system of symbols and stamps, setting forth the example of Ugarit and some Anatolian settlements that are contemporaries of Troy. [16]

### **3. NEW URBAN THEORIES**

Up until recently, these criteria of classification used to differentiate cities were welcomed by researchers as a method of presenting a theoretical approach to conceptualizing the city. The matter began to become controversial however when archeologists tended to be reluctant to subscribe to this theoretical framework on grounds that theories may have to be revised on the basis of material archeological facts. The various problems and misinterpretations that resulted from the adoption of such theories based on the Near East model of cities in different geographies gave way to new research that sought to remedy the dilemma, emerging in the end with completely different outcomes. According to this group of researchers, made up mostly of archeologists, although common ground was agreed upon, it was decided that it is inaccurate to define cities on the basis of a few criteria and theories and adapt the criteria to every region that might have different cultural backgrounds with manifestations of different populations, social and geographical factors, as well as diverse histories. [17] This group, which defended the stance that social, geographical, economic and spatial processes and their reciprocal interaction must be evaluated, claimed that urban theories are not universal and therefore there might be different local urban models in the sub-regions of large areas. [18] Contrary to traditional approaches that ignored local and regional characteristics, regional perspectives began to be set forth when it was seen that there were no urbanization hypotheses that encompassed all periods and regions. [19]

The inaccuracy of Kolb's paradigm has today started to be realized as a result of the local urban models that are being unearthed in new archeological excavations. All of the old and time-worn urbanization theories have lost their validity with the discovery of urban models that, for all their internal dynamics and regions that are compatible with conditions ripe for urbanization, are small-scale, sparsely populated, with a social structure exhibiting low levels of classes, that do not contain public structures such as temples or palaces, or if these exist, where

writing or the use of stamps as an indication of economic administration does not exist, where there is no density of artisan classes, and where even at the regional scale, trade relations are nonexistent. [20] Today, the new approach to urban science is in the regional and local context rather than through a global perspective. [21]

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This outdated point of view that Kolb adopted led way to the misinterpretation of the urbanization process of the Anatolian plateau and many settlements analyzed through the use of older definitions of the city were referred to by different names in the belief that they did not deserve the characterization of a city. In fact, as a result of this approach, it has even been claimed that urbanization in Anatolia developed under the Mesopotamian influence and the settlements there in some periods were rural extensions of the Near East. As these various theories began to be discussed however, a new perspective developed in which the origins of the settlements in Anatolia were attributed to the early stages of the Chalcolithic Age. They were described as reflecting a background of their own cultural infrastructure and history, and it was maintained that they developed throughout the Early Bronze Age, displaying differences according to region as well as interacting with regional contemporary cultures in neighboring vicinities. [22] At the same time, the plan arrangements, spatial foundations and general layouts of these settlements carried certain traditional characteristics, exhibiting a unique local tradition of urbanization that when observed from a regional perspective, could actually be called "city" settlements.

Contrary to the classical scheme, the Anatolian city model does not carry most of the variables that Kolb seeks. According to Kolb, the Anatolian city model does not always carry the characteristic features of cities that are of locomotive value, namely, a large and dense population that occupies an expansive area measured in hectares, a populated administrative class, acropolises that contain palaces and temples representative of secular power, an aristocratic elite composed of several ranks of high-level hierarchy, distinct intermediate social levels, activities of trade and artisanship that signify social and spatial indicators, and writing. An urban motif that can be also characterized by a small, sparse fabric of settlement where indicators such as a system of records composed of writing and accounts are not used, where the administrative hegemony that is prevalent over life and the economy is only reflected sometimes in architecture and sometimes only in the collection of finds, an administrative model that can be defined not only with a multilevel administrative class system but also with a political figure of authority such as a *bey* or *agha*, and where a privileged group of elites are not present aggregately designate the unique internal conditions and characteristics of Anatolia.

As can be seen, in trying to understand urban settlements, misleading interpretations can be made when evaluations are made on a comparison that does not take regional and local characteristics into account. New research and new readings of the phenomenon of urbanization supports this premise. Because of the error in his approach -and his reliance on time-worn perspectives- Kolb, in looking at the new picture that is being described in the context of changing discoveries and opinions, is committing an injustice not only to Troy but also to Korfmann, who maintains that Troy must be defined within its own unique identity

as a part of the Anatolian concept instead of being compared with cities in other regions.

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