Joanne M.A. Murphy (ed.), *Death in Late Bronze Age Greece: Variations on a Theme.* pp. 360. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19092-606-9, hardcover £68.

A meeting took place in the American Institute of American in 2014 with Kim Shelton and Joanne M. A. Murphy as its convenors – the latter as the only editor of its proceeding, of which a selected number of papers made their way into this well-knit volume by focusing on a main theme: the archaeology of mortuary practices from the so-called Late Bronze age period in the Aegean (i.e. *c.* 1680 to 1080 BCE). As the editor notes, in addition to the reported papers derived from talks delivered at the colloquium, there are substantial invited contributions which had not been displayed during the session. All of the 13 contributions (by leading international scholars) are the outcome of either careful re-examinations of existing data or interpretations of former data through the lenses of recent excavations, which contribute to their richness in terms of both content and refreshing perspectives. The resulting book is a fruitful collaborative achievement, not just in a renewed approach to the funerary landscape, but also in situating funerary data within the wider socio-political context of the time, as mortuary contexts are opened to these discourses, and indeed very often the ancient pre-Greek world is encountered through its funerary corpus.

While duly mentioning that, in recent years, research on *variations* of burial contexts across the Mediterranean region has become an important trend, Murphy's introduction disappointingly emphasizes that until now studies of Mycenaean mortuary customs, although having drawn the attention of serious scholarship in the field, have tended to provide a formalized and generalized overview – affording limited attention to funerary variability and diversity which have not been "fully explored" (p. 2). Even though an apparently (and relative) homogeneity of the material culture and political system diffused between the Aegean areas, focusing closely on regional and local political economy and linked rituals of commemoration shows a strong patterning of increasing diversity. In contextualizing subsections – aimed at general readers rather than scholars, Murphy outlines that Mycenaean burial grounds give way to a great variation in terms of architectural features and modes of commemoration when zooming in on cemeteries and individual tombs. A renewed approach through detailed "microgeographical" data analysis and their applications within broader socio-political contexts helps us understand some of the questions concerning different developmental trajectories across space and time.

The volume does convey the variety that must have characterized Mycenaean mortuary customs: its 14 diverse papers vary in scope, methodology and significance, although they do not offer a systematic view of the topic, as the editor claims in the first introductory chapter. The chapters are afterwards arranged regionally, the following eight concerning the Greek mainland (ch. 2-9), preceded by an introductory chapter (ch. 1), while the five other chapters explore the Aegean islands, Rhodes (ch. 10), Kos (ch. 11), and Crete (ch. 12-14), followed by an indispensable index.

Coming almost 50 years after the original publication of the Palace of Nestor at Pylos (Messenia), the first study calls for a need to take up the challenge of re-investigating original surveys of the evidence in order to re-assess the observations of previous scholars. Using field notes, old anthropological documentation and assemblages from 11 tombs excavated in the mid-20th c. in the light of recent authors' discoveries, Murphy et al. demonstrate the variability in the chronological development of the selected Pylian tombs, as well as the funerary rituals and their roles channelling social and political change as areas of competition and legitimization. Cultural influence analysis in the burial record allows us to trace the patterns of continuity and change in external connectivity, especially Minoan, which appears manifold. Human bones and teeth re-analysis inform about health status and the relative proportions of male and female burials in the area of the Palace of Nestor.

The Argolid is examined in the next three chapters, which are of premier importance in their discussions of Late Bronze age mortuary pattern, in many ways marked by variations, as per the title of the book.

Shelton offers a more complex picture of diachronic variations in mortuary data (regarding form and shape of the burial, the nature and quality of the dress and accompanying assemblage, etc.) in the cemeteries of Mycenae and Prosymna from Late Helladic I to III than those traditionally recited for these sites. Related to methodological issues, as the domestic evidence is limited for the Early Mycenaean period (i.e. LH I-II), most research has attempted to approach the phenomenon of social change in relation to ceremonial contexts and funerary practices, but not as fully as it might be, following the author.[1] Although she notes a bias

[1] A very recent complement for the analysis of the chamber

towards the low percentage of tombs excavated in Mycenae, she demonstrates that at the local level of the cemeteries around Mycenae and of Prosymna, persuasive evidence for social and political downturn is visible through the quantity and quality of burials and grave goods. So then, from the lavish funerary displays of the Early Palatial period (LH I-II) and a standardization of funerary rites in the following phase (LH IIIA), élite groups were moving towards a culture of great austerity in Late Helladic III B, for which the most striking parallel given by the author is the 5th c. BCE Athenian "sumptuary law" which limited the opulence of funerals and burials. The same variability phenomenon exists in the Mycenaean cemetery at Aidonia, where the author is currently excavating.

Another site in the northern Argolid, that of Deiras, is the subject of the following paper by Papadimitriou et al. – it is the most important cemetery in Argos, nearby settlements remains, excavated by the French School of Athens in the first half of the 20th century. The authors integrate freshly revised old data from the Middle and Late Helladic cemetery and the corresponding settlement in a comprehensive view. The study method follows a diachronic three-part analysis, carried out at the local level (individual cemetery, then related to the settlement of Argos) and at the regional level (in the broader context of the Argolid), allowing the recognition of micro-local perpetuated traditions and variations while keeping track of the big-picture of regional patterns. Given the valuable work that the authors have already completed on the ancient Argolid and several other related topics, there are fresh suggestions from the location and scaling of tombs (in terms of size, structure and grave goods association) about family/lineage groupings and social organization in Mycenaean cemeteries, and preserved funerary practices from the Middle to Late Helladic.

Moving slightly to the north, the detailed case-study of the *Mycenaean Cemetery at Ayia Sotira, Nemea,* provides interesting and multivocal ideas for understanding attitudes and practices surrounding burials from archaeological, chemical (organic residue and phytolith analysis) and anthropological data from recent salvage excavations. Smith et al. demonstrate that this combined evidence is helpful in that it offers pertinent ways of seeing and interpreting postmortem treatment of the deceased, including secondary burial, which are a common phenomenon in the Late Helladic period but "very few" are reported. Identification of mortuary behaviour and related social and ideological particularities are prominent in this discussion, such as skeletal remains removal and feasting events. The discussion of age groups indicates that "primarily 25 years old were deposited" (p. 100) highlighting maternity as a socially constructed privilege but avoiding the topic of female mortality, quite understandably as the focus is on burial practices, but it would be interesting to see how the authors consider theses situation compared to the Late Bronze age peak female mortality (especially coupled with the physical realities of maternal and perinatal mortality data).

Complementing each other to some extent, the next three essays are devoted to the archaeological and funeral landscape over the wide area of the Achaea region (in the far northern Peloponnese) through the Helladic period – Paschalidis on West Achaea, Borgna and De Angeli on the East, and Papazoglou-Manioudaki on both in a comparative approach. Each author argues that, in a somewhat peripheral Myceneaean region like Achaea, cultural and economic interactions with Mycenaean cores occurred but in an unique way than elsewhere in the Peloponnese area, which constitutes a very particular case. One note: as all those three papers deal with the same area, a single map could have been provided to plot the Achaean sites cited – for example, the same background map source is utilized twice, but there is a slight shift between (compare fig. 7.1 and 8.2).

The re-analysis of the archaeological material of old excavations at the cemetery of Clauss, near Patras, integrated into previous anthropological analysis, allows Paschalidis to sketches partially, but convincingly, the biography of several individuals buried during the Postpalatial period in Achaea (between the LH IIIB2 and LH IIIC periods). Following the purpose of reconstructing "individual stories" – that is to say the biography and trajectory of the deceased – in an anthropological approach based on a contextually appropriate discourse, a particular emphasis is made on Postpalatial tombs which present the highest number of primary burials. Implicitly starting from the principle that objects are made-for-tomb, the author cogently demonstrates the tomb occupants' life, focusing on their public persona and official career (for example: a veteran and his feeding bottle buried c. 3200 years ago), rendering their life history more remarkable and alive. One particular case adds to the problem of the presence of Italians in Achaea. Most interesting is the idea of 'legal looting' (p. 108)

tombs at Prosymna as an arena for political and social contention is: Steinmann, B.F. 2020. The Chamber Tombs at Prosymna: A New Social and Political Interpretation for a Group of Tombs. *Hesperia* 89 (3): 379-412.

which makes the point that fragmentary objects associated with secondary burials (i.e. "a bone hilt plate [which] belonged to a missing bronze knife") are probably the remains of tolerated grave robbery, i.e. objects extracted from the tomb and handed down between individuals linked to the dead (the tomb's owners or the deceased's descendants). The deposition of metal objects may also have been carried out in conscious ways for safekeeping in times of economic crisis.

The next paper by Papazoglou-Manoudaki is a comparative study of regional variations in settlement and necropolis data between eastern and western Mycenaean Achaea through two case studies – Aigion in the East and Mygdalia in the West, the latter being currently excavated by Paschaladis and Papazoglou-Manioudaki which contributes an important pioneering research in Mycenaean Achaean archaeology. The author lucidly lays out the locational settings of settlement and their intra- and extramural cemeteries, and questions the economic differences between life and death communities (i.e. banking on death as a means of investment, or investing in life?) with the aim of sketching sociopolitical change during Late Helladic Achaea. To demonstrate this, she cites diachronic change in mortuary patterns as well as settlement excavation results: for example, the absence of tholos tomb and the intramuros cemetery with inconspicuous grave goods in the Prepalatial period may indicate that Aigion was politically dependent to centers of the northeastern Peloponnese, while the appearance of richly furnished tholos tombs (some of the most remarkable finds being black-and-white illustrated) in the LH IIB/IIIA1 may point to the existence of local Achaean chiefs and power centres in Achaea and changing trading routes. Then prestigious burials with weapons dated to the Postpalatial period (LH IIIC) speak of a new local warrior-like elites emerging, following the collapse of the palatial system.

Borgna and De Angeli report the preliminary results of the first three (2012-2014) of eight annual campaigns of excavations and analyses carried out on a cemetery between 2012 and 2019, in the Trapeza area (near aforesaid Aigion), in Eastern Achaea, where were accidentally discovered several Mycenaean vases almost a century ago. The cemetery's continuous use since the Late Bronze age to Submycenaean periods and the geological particularity of the ground (a "sandy bedrock" instead of soft rocks usually chosen during Mycenaean times) are underscored. Firmly and rationally structured following four research goals of the project, the paper closely examines the stratigraphic sequence of two tombs, their burial ritual (depositional and post-depositional practices, *etc.*) and material culture associated, tracing interactions between the living and the dead. Reopening and post-burial actions are understood in ideological terms, such as the re-entry into the tomb 2 for the deposit of offerings and additional ceramics (supposedly the remains of feasting) in LH IIIC related by the authors to an ancestor cult and the structuring of political power around these practices during the Postpalatial period. One provocative argument is the correspondence between change in the stratigraphic record of the tomb 1 (a sedimentation layer viewed as a sudden "physical and cultural gap") and the "arrival of new groups of people", probably from Western Achaea (p. 163). In this sense, Trapeza is a useful proxy for exploring social, cultural and political situations and transformations of Mycenaean peripheral territories at the very end of the Late Bronze age.

In their overview of Late Bronze age Macedonian archaeology, Triantaphyllou and Andreou paint in broad brushstrokes what we do know about North Greek social organization and the existence of regional variations during the second millennium BCE as reflected by the very recent archaeological activity on funerary evidence – over the last 25 years extensive excavation in the region has greatly enhanced the dataset of Macedonian features and graves during Mycenaean times. There are discussed the differences with the central and southern Aegean by looking at many funeral peculiarities (cemetery organisation, grave constructions, funerary customs and material remains) that may reflect a particular historical development for the Macedonian communities compared to other parts of the Aegean. As excavation results are even preliminary or disparate by region, the authors note that our understanding of second-millennium BCE Macedonia will continue to expand – particularly that of Central and Eastern Macedonia.

Th next essays by Georgiadis (Rhodes), McNamee and Vitale (Kos), Girella, Smith, and D'Agata (Crete) reveal how individuals were buried on each island, what settings (historical, social, ideological, etc.) have shaped burial rituals, and how local communities constructed their social identities through death. As naturally open to the outside, Aegean islands and their cultural indications in the graves have a central role for understanding the cultural dynamics between mainland Greece and the southern Aegean.

With new attention to tombs' construction, dress of the deceased and the burial goods assemblages,

Georgiadis provides an overview of the Rhodian funerary practices during the Mycenaean cultural influence. He notes that although the adoption of one of the main Mycenaean grave construction features (the chamber tomb) in LH IIB-IIIA1, burial evidence shows some divergence with southern Greek mainland burial practices (such as the secondary treatment of the deceased which "was not associated with the preparation of a tomb for receiving a new interment" [p. 202] unlike in the Mainland) and a strong, idiosyncratic regional setting, while presenting diverse local particularities between geographic areas. This set of data reflects, as argued by the author, the socio-economic changes among the Rhodian communities, from very closed elite privileges in the afterlife (in LH IIB-IIIA1) to a general trend of broader accessibility (in terms of social extension) to conspicuous display.

Interestingly, a similar idiosyncratic regional particularity is observed by McNee and Vitale in Kos, by re-investigating the burial features of the Langada cemetery – which was excavated in the first half of the 20th c. and is currently the subject of an international research project. The authors clearly and precisely outline the methodology and the data in order to identify cultural and social aspects of Kos behind funerary culture, especially during the Palatial and Postpalatial periods (i.e. 14th-11th c. BCE) as the cemetery of Langada is in use from LH IIIA2 to LH IIIC. As in Rhodes in the Palatial period, the appearance of the chamber tomb and the adoption of material culture bearing Mycenaean characteristics show the significant cultural impact of the Mycenaean's funerary customs on the island, however certain funerary feature display some unique characteristics shared at the island scale that can be labelled overtly Koan (such as a "simplified" grave construction, i.e. "a limited number of architectural features", p. 241-242). Changing funerary customs in the Postpalatial period, they suggest, are likely univocal reflections of modifications in the social structure of Koan society during LH IIIC – some interesting comparisons with the funerary environment of the Greek mainland offer a bigger picture.

As a kind of synthesis of the author's earlier published major works on related topics, Girella examines the set of funerary practices of the Western Mesara in southern Crete to reflect more widely "change and discontinuity" (p. 249) from the 17th to the end of the 13th century BCE. As the author claims, death has been a central concern in social, ideological and political writings on Cretan societies at the island scale, however little attention has been paid to the diachronic variations of mortuary practices in southern Crete as a case study used to provide an historical overview of Bronze age Crete after the Protopalatial period. With an eye toward assessing their various gaps and biases (especially for the MM IIIA-LM IB phases), this chapter indicates the complex variations in cultural and ritual data from Neopalatial and Postpalatial burials, where socio-political impacts both maintained a community identity rooted in a local tradition and a redefined inter-community identities, especially with Mycenaean Knossos. Seven tables well organize and summarize the large amount of data available.

In a discussion of three coastal cemeteries from north-eastern Crete, Smith explores the "power of cemeteries" for the living, which he measures from several criteria associated, following the author's opinion, with social rank (such as construction and place of grave, complexity of rituals, material deposition, and "demographic patterns", p. 283). Two of the investigated cemeteries (Limenaria, used during LM IIIA1-IIIB, and the Artisans' Quarter, frequented during LM IIIA2-IIIB) are associated with the nearby settlement of Mochlos, while the evidence of the third one (Myrsini, probably used during LM IIIB, excavated in the 20th century, poorly published and partially looted) is very scanty since no settlement has been recognized and the tombs are no longer visible, as the author regrets. Although inclusion of poorly published sites may introduce bias, Smith demonstrates that such data should not be dismissed outright, and help to provide a more comprehensive insight into funerary behaviour in the Mirabello region ; similar burial forms are noted and might be the product of common socio-cultural traditions at a regional scale. Smith also questions the – archaeological – absence of markers that incicated pre-existing graves, although reopening of graves is a widespread practice which involves an act of memory.

In the closing chapter, D'Agata, by working through expressions of social identities in LM III mortuary contexts, argues that clay pyxides as well as jewellery may be implicit in the construction and expression of female gender of high-status from the 14th century, i.e. at the moment where new burial fashions were introduced and Knossos was reoccupied by Linear B writers. She briefly and helpfully sets forth evidence about Minoan and Mycenaean gender differentiation, such as iconography, writtem evidence and burial customs associated with osteological analyses – even if skeletal material data are available only for 17% of LM II-IIIB tombs. With such disparate data sets and bias being considered, she demonstrates that grave goods aimed first at displaying status and

wealth (of the deceased's family) instead of gender during the Final Palatial period, and she points to a general lack of "female visibility" in LM II-IIIA2 graves, which contrasts with the recognizable LM IIIA2 female graves (thanks to the pyxides and the body ornaments) and shows social selectiveness through funerary practices throughout Late Bronze age Crete.

Murphy has assembled 14 chapters of uniformly high quality demonstrating well the considerable diversity of Aegean communities' attitude towards death and the afterlife during Late Bronze age, and the issues in interpreting it, as no single explanation would satisfy all circumstances. One could imagine that the diversity was greater since the surviving remains reflect just a percentage of the population and that a significant proportion was deposited in ways that may elude us. This volume will therefore have a lasting value, not just for the representativeness of these variations as well as regular and recurrent form of burial rites, but also for the high number of ground-breaking chapters on unpublished data. It deserves the attention of all those interested in issues in mortuary archaeology.

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Nicoletta Momigliano, *In Search of the Labyrinth. The Cultural Legacy of Minoan Crete*. pp. xvi +362, 83 b/w ills. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. ISBN 978-1-7845-38545, hardcover £70; 978-1-350-15670-8, paperback £20; E-book 978-1-35015-672-2, £18.

Nicoletta Momigliano (henceforth M.). is not new to reception studies and to the study of the Minoan legacy in the 20th and 21st century. Her excellently crafted volumes, *Archaeology and European Modernity. Producing and Consuming the "Minoans"* (co-edited with Y. Hamilakis, 2006) and *Cretomania. Modern Desires for the Minoan Past* (co-edited with A. Farnoux, 2017), and her own articles and chapters (including Momigliano 2002, 2004 [with N. Karadimas], 2006a [with Y. Hamilakis], 2006b, 2017, 2019) set this single-authored monograph on solid scholarly grounds. Note should also be made of previous and contemporary significant scholarship in the field, not least Y. Hamilakis' edited volume *Labyrinth Revisited. Revisiting Minoan Archaeology* (2002), G. Cadogan's '"The Minoan distance": the impact of Knossos upon the twentieth century' and A. Karetsou's 'Knossos after Evans: past interventions, present state and future solutions' chapters in C. Cadogan et al. (eds) *Knossos: Palace, City, State* (2004), J. Papadopoulos' article 'Inventing the Minoans: Archaeology, Modernity and the Quest for European Identity' in the *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* (2005) and recently C. Morris's chapter 'The Usable Past: Minoans Reimagined' in B. Davis and R. Laffineur (eds), *Νεώτερος: Studies in Bronze Age Aegean Art and Archaeology in Honor of Professor John G. Younger on the Occasion of His Retirement* (2020), as well as the much earlier revisionist study of J. Bintliff 'Structuralism and myth in Minoan Studies' in *Antiquity* (1984).

M.'s monograph is the first sole-authored study to consider the phenomenon of *Cretomania* – a term first coined by the renowned author Paul Morand in the early 1960's to describe the creative obsession with all things Minoan– in the context of material culture. It aims to 'combine a history of Minoan archaeology with a history of modern responses to its major discoveries' (p. xiii) and to 'highlight (or, at least, begin to explore) some topics pertaining to the reception of the Minoans that have not attracted much attention so far, such as the role of Minoan material culture as a catalyst for new creativity; the role of modern artists and writers in the diffusion of knowledge about the Minoan past, beyond the narrow boundaries of specialist disciplines; and, last but not least, the potential influence of artists and writers on archaeological and historical enquiry, its reception and interpretation' (pp. 5-6). In addressing the topic, M. quickly and rightly rejects the idea that Arthur Evans should be blamed for the notion of Minoan pacifism ('unquestionably, Evans's Minoans often appear too good to be true, but he does not deserve to be criticized for this. The notion of the pacifist Minoans seems to have arisen from superficial reading of his writings and, above all, from the works of others' [p. 65, with in-depth discussion in pp. 65-69]. To achieve its aim, the book discusses a broad data set of specialist and non-specialist receptions that demonstrably engage with, use, adapt and reference Minoan material culture, ranging from the familiar (e.g. M. Renault's 'Theseus' novels) to 'rather obscure and not exactly high-quality materials' (p. 16) (e.g. Elisabeth Lawton's 1977 pamphlet 'The Inevitability of Matriarchy'); receptions that have influenced considerably the production and diffusion of knowledge and have contributed to various extents to this creative process, both within and without academia: academics, excavators, travel writers, composers, novelists, poets, filmmakers, dancers,