

PREHISTORY

Christina Souyoudzoglou-Haywood and Christina Papoulia (eds) *Archaeology of the Ionian Sea*. pp. 216, figs 132 (incl. 3 tables) almost entirely b&w, 1 appendix. Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2022. ISBN: 978-1-78925-673-4 hardcover, 978-1-78925-674-1 epub, hardcover £50.

The Ionian Sea is a somewhat nebulous concept, difficult to divide from the Adriatic on the north and uncertain in its extent to the south; the group of islands usually called Ionian is certainly at its centre, but for a long time the name was extended to incorporate not only Kerkyra (modern Corfu) well to the north of these but Kythera off the south-eastern peninsula of the Peloponnese. The administrative arrangements have now been changed to exclude Kythera, but Corfu remains part of the group and is the home of the Ionian University. However, it is rarely mentioned in this volume, which focusses much more on the central group of islands, particularly Kefalonia, Ithaka and Zakynthos, and is almost entirely concerned with their prehistoric archaeology. These islands have attracted attention since the beginning of Greek prehistoric archaeology, with a marked focus on attempts to identify the home of the legendary Odysseus, clearly set on an island called Ithake in the *Odyssey* and associated with the island called Ithaka in Classical times and now again having that name (after a long period as Thiaki). But this island has proved less productive of prehistoric remains than the much larger Kefalonia and Zakynthos, and the search for links to famous legends has tended to obscure the islands' real significance as likely staging points on the natural sea-routes from western Greece up the Adriatic and across it to southern Italy and the central Mediterranean.

This book publishes papers given at a 2020 conference, and is divided into three parts. Part A contains only a general discussion (Dawson) setting out the themes of 'island archaeology' and stressing that islands should be seen neither as isolated and self-sufficient nor as simply dependent on a neighbouring mainland, but as potentially playing an active role in patterns of interconnection and circulation of people, goods and ideas within a broader context that included neighbouring mainlands. Part B concerns research work in the earlier prehistory, generally and on individual

islands, and Part C gathers studies relevant to the Late Bronze Age. Throughout, material obviously relevant to the themes considered in Part A is presented. The study of the knapped stone artefacts identifiable as Upper and even Middle Palaeolithic that are abundantly found in some areas shows how far back the connections between the islands and the adjacent mainland must have gone, for these have been found in intensive survey work on islands east and south-east of Lefkada (ch. 2, Galanidou *et al.*), and also on Zakynthos (ch. 3, Ligkovanlis and Kourtesi-Philippakis). Since at least some of these must have been true islands even when sea levels were lower, the clear implication is that some form of sea-going craft was developed at a remarkably early date, that would have been used to visit the archipelago, for hunting, foraging and prospecting for useful materials, and that this tradition of sea-going continued or was constantly revived over the many centuries before the establishment of settled farming groups, to continue with varying strength during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. The possibility that the earliest, pre-Neolithic communities may have been involved in much wider networks of contact and exchange in the Adriatic region is discussed in ch. 1 (Papoulia). By late Neolithic times, certainly, obsidian whose ultimate source was Melos is found in the Drakaina cave on Kefalonia, also on the islet of Arkoudi just south of Lefkada; items of talc and gabbro, materials that come from the Pindus region, and a fragment of a marble item likely to be Naxian are also found in Drakaina (ch. 4, Stratouli, especially pp. 58-9).

Striking finds like these enliven the accounts of what may often appear to be rather unexciting pottery and other artefacts, sometimes parts of buildings and burials (mainly children), that form the bulk of what is reported from surveys and excavations of Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age remains on various islands, as in chs. 2 (Meganisi), 5 (Sotiriou, on Kefalonia) and 7 (Wijngaarden *et al.*, on Zakynthos). But these discoveries provide vital evidence about the human occupation of the islands in pre-Late Bronze Age times, on which for a long time very little information has been available. In south Kefalonia in particular there are now indications of substantial early communities, with a possible Final Neolithic or Early Bronze Age fortification at Arginia (p. 66) and much obsidian at Sami, which might have been a harbour site (p. 70), while a shipwreck containing mainly amphorae, attributed to EH II-III, found at Giagana in the strait between Kefalonia and Ithaka (pp. 65-6, 109-10), suggests that substantial trade had developed along this route, perhaps aiming at the very prosperous community with wide Aegean connections represented by the R tumuli of

Steno on Lefkada. This theme of extensive trading connections can be placed in a wider Adriatic context by links in material from several islands and the nearby mainland with the extraordinary 'Cetina phenomenon' of the late Early Bronze Age, which spread pottery types of ultimately Croatian origin as far south as Olympia and along the Corinthian Gulf to the eastern Greek mainland (pp. 107-8, cf. also p. 68). But this episode of really widespread contacts seems to have been relatively short-lived; even with the new evidence from surveys, the Middle Bronze Age in the islands remains a period of which we know relatively little.

The Late Bronze Age is of course the period in which the central islands became part of the Mycenaean world, and they must surely have played a role in the contacts clearly established between the developing Mycenaean centres in the Peloponnese and central Greece, and those of the southern Adriatic, south Italy and Sicily, from the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, attested by the appearance of pottery of the earliest Mycenaean phases in the Lipari islands and at Monte Grande in Sicily, and rather later but still early (LH II) pieces at Roca Vecchia in Apulia, and quantities of amber, most of it ultimately Baltic, at some of the earliest Mycenaean centres. But there is very little of this nature in the islands; only a very few Mycenaean pottery pieces even as early as LH II have been found, and the bulk of the Mycenaean pottery, imported and locally made, belongs to the mature Mycenaean phases, LH IIIA2 to IIIC, in which the few identified settlements seem mainly to be dated. However, the apparently dedicatory miniature cups and other vessels represented in (ritual?) hearth deposits at Kapros in south-east Kefalonia (Ch. 11, Yiannouli), which have parallels at other sites on Kefalonia and Ithaca and also in Cretan Neopalatial material, and the even more remarkable copper vessel, apparently stamp-decorated and to the reviewer's knowledge unique, indicate how much we may be missing.

Nevertheless, it is hard to see very marked effects of external links in the local cultures in Souyoudzoglou-Haywood's masterly survey (ch. 9) of the characteristics of the central islands in the Late Bronze Age and the setting of expanding trading contacts between the east and central Mediterranean which must have affected them (on this topic see also Iacono and Guglielmino, ch. 15, on the Italian evidence). Obvious harbour sites have not been identified, although the possibility of one at the site of the modern Livadi marsh on Kefalonia is argued for in ch. 10 (Styles *et al.*), and not only are all known settlements of the Mycenaean period small (p. 120), but only in the coastal regions are

distinctive features of Mycenaean material culture found (p. 122). But contacts with the mainland regions that had already become Mycenaean clearly did have some effect, in the importing and, later, production of decorated pottery (the plain pottery seems often to continue inherited local traditions, cf. Ch. 6, Pentedeka *et al.*, on Ithakan material), and the adoption of types of stone-built and rock-cut tombs of typical Mycenaean forms. As is increasingly becoming realised in discussion of Mycenaean chamber tombs, such tombs, which would require the input of skilled labour and experience, are likely to represent the decision of an upper stratum in the population, probably the most prosperous, to present itself as 'Mycenaean' in an important social area. There is no need to interpret it, at any stage, as evidence for large-scale arrival of 'immigrants' or, after the c. 1200 BC 'Collapse' of the Mycenaean palatial civilisation, 'refugees' (for well-deserved criticism of the 'immigrant' theory see Voskos, Ch. 13), for such features should not be taken as markers of a particular ethnic group. In fact, chamber tombs particularly were adapted in various forms in several parts of the Aegean. But it does seem reasonable to emphasise that, as on mainland Greece, this was the practice of a presumable wealthier stratum of the population, and the development of the type on Kefalonia led in an independent direction, to what have been termed 'cave dormitories' containing many pits holding the remains of multiple burials (cf. ch. 12, Metaxas).

Kefalonia is also the source of other striking evidence bearing on the whole question of social stratification, so marked a feature on mainland Mycenaean Greece, in the local societies of the islands. At the site of Tzannata in south-east Kefalonia a major building has been found, apparently in use from an early Mycenaean stage, and a paved pathway was apparently built over it to a tholos tomb, in use over LH IIIA1-IIIB, that, though robbed, preserved some remarkable goods, including a pair of gold-plated bronze horns that must have belonged to a bovid figure or perhaps rhyton, a miniature gold doubleaxe, and a Late Minoan IIIA2 amphora (Metaxas, p. 171), all suggesting the kind of contact with the Aegean world and accumulation of wealth from involvement in long-distance exchange connections that is so hard to identify otherwise. In contrast, the building seems likely to be developed entirely within a local tradition close to that of Middle Helladic Greece, substantially built but without any sophistication; in a source available to the reviewer it is described as a long, apsidal-ended and rather elliptical structure resembling the 'megaron' form, but subdivided into four large rooms. It seems quite reasonable to identify building

and tomb as evidence for a probably long-lived local seat of power, but it is without close parallel in the islands, though like the Kapros material it represents a warning on what could be waiting to be found.

There is, it may be noted, no evidence for anything resembling a fortification, such as might seem appropriate in Papadopoulos's interpretation (ch. 14) of society in western mainland Greece and the Ionian islands in the later Mycenaean period. But this relies on too many questionable, often simplistic, assumptions (e.g. on the significance of weapon burial) and acceptance of often dubious claims of fortification, even misstatements about what evidence there is (e.g. there is no fortification at Nichoria, Malthi was abandoned by this time, and at Pylos the known fortification is definitely early), to be taken very seriously.

Following the collapse of palatial Mycenaean civilisation, connections with southern Italy and to some extent up the Adriatic were maintained particularly by the local centres of Achaea in the north-west Peloponnese for several generations, and will necessarily have involved the islands. Centres in Kefalonia in particular evidently participated and prospered considerably, to judge from the wealth of pottery and other grave-goods found in several cemeteries in the south of the island (cf. Metaxas's and Voxos's chapters). But the abandonment of chamber tomb burial deprives us of a major source of evidence, and we become very short of information again on development into the Early Iron Age, although there is some evidence, especially from Ithaka, and here it seems worth mentioning one more notable find. The Drakaina cave on Kefalonia was evidently developed into a ritual site in the Early Iron Age (Appendix, Karadima), which has produced not only local pottery but one likely south Italian import, suggesting that there was continued if probably much rarer contact to the west (p. 213).

Overall, this is a collection of many interesting papers, but although they add considerably to our knowledge of this region and help to construct a framework within which we could be viewing it, they also serve to indicate the size of the continuing gaps in our information. It is to be hoped that contributors to this volume will continue to think about the problems and fill in the gaps as well as they have done here.

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Judith Weingarten, Colin F. Macdonald, Joan Aruz, Lara Fabian and Nisha Kumar (eds) *Processions: Studies of Bronze Age Ritual and Ceremony Presented to Robert B. Koehl*. pp. 327. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2023. ISBN: 978-1-80327-534-5, paperback £59.00.

Or,

Cult and complexity in ancient Crete and the wider Mediterranean

Robert (Bobby) Koehl, well-known for his interests in ritual artefacts and representations, will be honoured to have a *Festschrift* incorporating this quality and diversity of scholarship, which has been so excellently edited and includes so many warm and heartfelt acknowledgements of his collegiality, throughout the text as well as in an editors' Introduction (pp. vii-xii) and a separate 'Tributes' section (pp. xxiii-xix). More than many *Festschriften*, the book is a useful up-to-date resource and pointer, with extensive bibliographies, for students of ancient iconography and ritual – primarily in the Bronze Age Aegean, Koehl's core interest area. It is divided into regional sections: 'Crete' (pp. 3-128); 'The Cyclades' (pp. 129-60); 'Greek Mainland' (pp. 161-239); 'Cyprus, Syria, the Levant and Egypt' (pp. 253-324) and 'The Central Mediterranean', the last comprising one long paper (pp. 325-44). The 'Procession' of the title, punning on one of the themes of Bronze Age iconographic study which is well-discussed here, includes many notable scholars contributing significant and elegant commentary – including T. Palaima on the exact nature and possible distribution of the feasting equipment recorded in the Pylos Ta tablets, J. Wright on ritual links between Mycenaean political centres and their hinterlands, J. Weingarten and J. Aruz on representations of the 'Minoan genius' hybrid creature in ancient art; M. Nelson on how palatial and subpalatial architecture formed and was formed by ritual, P. Betancourt with a survey of warrior representations, and J.L. Davis and S. Stocker on the recently discovered Tomb of the Griffin Warrior at Pylos, here through the lens of a gold cup. The single-artefact focus in comparative context, typical of *Festschriften*, inevitably appears in other contributions: a striking LHIIIC multi-ring rhyton from Tiryns with anthropomorphic head recalling figurines of the LH III period, plastic snakes and painted decoration including a representation of a boat, is of particular interest for its Cretan as well connections and is lovingly detailed by E. Kardamaki, M. Kostoula, J. Maran and A. Papadimitriou: A Vlachopoulos makes a brief