

made, but does this imply it was made by the rather evanescent local people, who left no EN, MN or LN trace anywhere else in the Mani? If the pottery was intended to be used briefly, or to be immediately broken when deposited as obtains in Chamber Z, a rapid local manufacture by exogenous groups may make more sense than the transportation of large quantities of pots over long distances. If the potters came from different communities this would also explain the marked stylistic variability noted by K. Psimogiannou. To go back to Papathanasiou's quotation, I suspect that Alepotrypa 'played an important role in southern Greece', much more than a local role.

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- Demoule, J.-P. and C. Perlès 1993. The Greek Neolithic: a new review. *Journal of World Prehistory* 7(4): 335–415.
- Mavridis, F. and J. Tae Jensen (eds) 2013. *Stable Places and Changing Perceptions: Cave Archaeology in Greece* (British Archaeological reports International series 2558). Oxford: Archaeopress.
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- Renfrew, C. 1972. *The Emergence of Civilization: the Cyclades and the Aegean in the Third Millennium B.C.* London: Methuen.
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**Søren Dietz, Fanis Mavridis, Žarko Tankosić and Turan Takaoğlu (eds). *Communities in transition. The circum-Aegean area during the 5th and 4th millennia BC*. pp.xxi+633,374 illustrations (many colour), including maps, also tables in many papers. (Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens 20). 2018. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books. ISBN 978–1–78570–720–9 hardback £70.**

This is a massive book, deriving from a multi-paper conference held in Athens, and really there is too much material for a single hardback volume, which seems to have affected the quality of the binding (on the reviewer's copy the front cover split from the spine at the top quite quickly). The conference was intended to focus on the social changes that occurred during the development from Neolithic to Early Bronze Age in the later 5th and 4th millennia BC, the period widely defined as Final Neolithic in Aegean terminology, in the 'circum-Aegean area'. After an explanatory preface by the editors, an Introduction contains the editors' summary presentation of their view of the content and value of the papers, arranged first by significant themes, then by survey and site reports within the regions between which the papers have been distributed. The reviewer recommends reading this as a very useful guide to the mass of material, allowing the perception of shared features and the making of cross-connections that may not be immediately apparent. The papers are arranged in six sections, the first containing six papers that consider general, often wide-ranging themes; these begin with Renfrew's exposition of how his identification of a 'Final Neolithic' period in the Aegean, stretching from the later fifth through most of the fourth millennium, led to the recognition that it could be related to comparable periods in the sequences of neighbouring regions. A further 51 papers are set out in five geographically arranged sections: the Balkans (principally Bulgaria); northern Greece, meaning the mainland and including Thessaly; west, central and southern Greece, again meaning subdivisions of the mainland; the Aegean islands, Crete, and Cyprus; and western Anatolia (which includes papers relating to Lycia and Phrygia).

The considerable length of the period under discussion makes the reviewer uneasy about the use of the term 'transition' to define this. One would normally expect this to characterise a relatively short episode, and where sites are occupied for long periods, to detect several transitions between phases

that can each have their own character. Similarly, the use of the term 'final', as in Final Neolithic in the Aegean sequence cannot avoid giving the impression of a kind of coda, a finishing off. Using the terms Late Neolithic II or Chalcolithic avoids these overtones. Coleman in fact suggests both Chalcolithic and Transitional in a new arrangement supported by a massive array of radiocarbon dates (p. 33). 'Transitional' still occupies some 400 years, but it could well be a good idea to subdivide this massive period in some way, recognising the point made by Renfrew and Mina, that the contrast that used to be made between Neolithic and Early Bronze Age is no longer so impressive, now that technological and social developments that once used to be thought new in the Early Bronze Age can now be paralleled at various later Neolithic sites.

This point is underlined by the relatively recent discovery of the extraordinary site of Strofilas on Andros, which the reviewer considers one of the most exciting and significant finds in Aegean archaeology in recent times (and which provides cover art for the volume). As Televantou's account indicates, this has many characteristics of a town, with a fortification, major buildings, and an elaborate culture that includes much use of rock-carvings, placed at significant points; links between its material and that of the earliest Cycladic Bronze Age material are evident, but it belongs essentially in the fourth millennium. For all the abundant material, however, its origins and the reasons for its abandonment remain enigmatic, serving as a salutary reminder of how much we still do not know.

Few of the papers are concerned with more than a single site or region or class of material, and a glance at the map on p. xii of sites that play a role in the discussion reveals how uneven the coverage actually is. The overall impression is of thin scatters over very broad regions, interspersed with a few tighter groups, and even this has a potential to mislead, for many of the sites shown were only occupied or otherwise in use for part of the period, and their evidence has to be combined to get any kind of impression of regional development. But the sites are still too few and too unevenly distributed for one to feel confident that they can give an adequate picture of a whole large region in Greece like the Peloponnese or Thessaly, let alone much larger sections of the Balkans or Anatolia. Of course, this reflects typical general features of the period, the abandonment of well-known and long-occupied sites and the difficulty of identifying evidence of subsequent occupation; but the example of Strofilas is a reminder of how much we owe, still, to lucky discoveries, how impossible it is to search

literally everywhere, and how much may have been lost through the effects of natural processes and later human land-use. It is worth remembering, in the Aegean context, how extraordinarily little evidence we have for the disposal of the dead for all the millennia of Neolithic occupation, and it is remarkable how many of the sites in southern mainland Greece are caves. Few of these are clearly habitation sites, but their use for various social purposes implies the existence of untraced populations settled nearby.

Nevertheless, some papers attempt to explain the disappearance of settlements in terms of the movement of human population, either to other regions (Georgieva) or from the plains to the hills (Aslanis). Coleman also invokes population movement to explain the introduction to the Aegean of the language ancestral to Greek, brought by a population originating from the Pontic-Caspian steppe, which he would place in the fourth millennium. But his arguments seem to rely more on the appearance of striking items and motifs, at least some of which could be explained in terms of interregional contacts, than of new and consistent assemblages of features. He relates various innovations to the supposed newcomers, including horse-riding, to the reviewer's surprise (it is news to the reviewer that there is any osteological evidence for horses in Greece before the Middle Bronze Age), but, as so often with such theories, he does not give attention to the question of motivation. Why should population groups whose economy was developed in the steppes, even if it changed somewhat on a passage through Bulgaria, see any advantage in moving into mainland Greece south of Macedonia, let alone the Aegean islands, and how easily could they adapt their way of life to the new environment? Populations can hardly adopt new patterns in something as basic as their means of subsistence simply by an effort of will. The reviewer has more sympathy with Renfrew's wish for greater concern with demographic processes than 'invasionary episodes' (p. 9) and notes his comments on the possibility of getting reliable data on climate change (p. 8), which suggests that he is not convinced by current arguments.

The reviewer has to admit that he is not very well informed on the arguments for climate change, nor familiar enough with the archaeological evidence for the period, even from the Aegean, let alone the Balkans or Anatolia, to be able to give a more critical analysis of the arguments presented. His general impression is that most papers will be of value principally to specialists concerned with the particular region or cultural grouping to

which the sites belong. But relatively few papers are concerned with interconnections or take wide views; most are concerned with internal processes rather than external links. Some deal with special types of artefact whose distribution spans a wide geographical range of cultural contexts, but the underlying picture of likely cross-cultural contacts is not as much discussed as one might hope. One cannot help wondering whether the discussions that followed the papers might have been illuminating sometimes. It would be interesting to know how Anatolian archaeologists took to Georgieva's suggestion that a migrant population from Bulgaria stimulated further development in Anatolian metallurgy (p. 103), for instance, or what reaction there was to Aslanis's hypothesis that the major farming settlements of mainland Greece were abandoned because of climate change, their populations moved into the hills, and 'the economy switched over to pastoralism' (pp. 28–9).

Almost all papers give detailed and readily intelligible accounts of their material and are illustrated with useful selections of photos and drawings, not only of pottery but of metalwork, figurines and other notable finds. The general papers in the first section (Renfrew; Kotsakis; Parkinson, Ridge and Gyucha; Aslanis; Coleman and Facorellis; Mina) all deserve attention, despite critical comments above. Others that seem particularly informative and/or most likely to excite some general interest, apart from that on Strofilas already mentioned, concern: the Chalcolithic site at Varhari in the Rhodope Mountains of south Bulgaria, a single-period specialist production centre of scrapers, beads and figurines in many kinds of stone (Boyadzhiev and Boyadzhiev); the latest Chalcolithic phase at Tell Yunastite, a burnt settlement site further north in Bulgaria, in which house contents including many bodies were found on the floors (Matsanova and Mishina; this site produced a remarkable series of 'cult tables', discussed by Terzijska-Ignatova); relative and absolute chronology between the Aegean and the Black Sea in the fifth millennium, with particular attention to the widespread development of graphite-painted ware (Reingruber); the role of the Theopetra cave in western Thessaly (probably ritual) at the end of the Neolithic (Kyparissi-Apostolika); the evidence of transitions in Boeotia from the earlier Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age (Bintliff and Sarri); the different patterns of development in parts of the Peloponnese between Late Neolithic and Early Helladic I (Pullen); the Early Helladic I cemetery of rock-cut chamber tombs at Kalyvia in Elis (Rambach), a considerable extension of our knowledge of Early Helladic burial customs; settlement pattern and social organisation in Crete c. 3700–3000 BC (Nowicki); the tell site of Çukuriçi Höyük on the central West Anatolian coast,

which has remarkable evidence for long-distance connections and specialised craftwork in the fifth millennium and again in the Early Bronze Age (Horejs and Schwall); and two marble conical 'rhyta' (a type with a long history and very wide distribution in the area covered by the book) of a new 'transitional' form from Yeşiltepe, a site well inland in western Anatolia (Takaoğlu and Bamyacı). Also, Alram-Stern's paper concerning the material of Visviki Magoula, close to Dhimini in Thessaly, which includes an elaborate 'megaron'-like house plan but mainly pottery that covers the transition from the Arapi to the Dhimini phase (so rather earlier than the period of the book), should not go unmentioned, because it has some particularly fine drawings of elaborately painted pottery, a reminder of how sophisticated pottery of the Greek Neolithic could be.

The general impression given by this book is that the Aegean was not influenced strongly by neighbours to north and east in this period of transition, as it had been in earlier Neolithic phases – unless one accepts Coleman's hypothesis concerning the 'arrival of the Greeks', about which the reviewer feels very wary – still less that it exercised any appreciable influence in those directions. But the example of Strofilas, once again, should warn us that at any moment a new find may radically affect our ideas about this interesting period.

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**R. Angus K. Smith, Mary K. Dabney, Evangelia Pappi, Sevasti Triantaphyllou and James C. Wright. *Ayia Sotira. A Mycenaean chamber tomb cemetery in the Nemea Valley, Greece. (Prehistoric Monographs 33). pp. xxviii+202, 54 pls.+139 b/w text figures, 62 tables. 2017. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press. ISBN hardback 978–1–93143–490–1, ebook 978–1–62303–420–7 hardback \$80.00***

This volume publishes a group of 6 chamber tombs excavated at the south end of the Nemea valley, not much more than a kilometre to the north-west of the settlement of Tsoungiza, which itself lies a similar distance slightly to the north-west of the historical Sanctuary of Zeus, site of one of the four