

cylinder seal supposed to come from Lattakia close by, all datable within a relatively narrow range from the end of the 14th century to the 12th century BC. Through a series of close comparisons, he establishes that there are such significant differences between at least some of this material (at a minimum, two of the tablets) and the material assigned to Cypro-Minoan 1 or 2, that the separateness of Cypro-Minoan 3 seems very likely.

Finally, Egetmeyer uses the publication of two new inscriptions in the Cypriot syllabary (which he terms Cypro-Greek, although some inscriptions in it appear not to be Greek) as a base from which to consider the latest Bronze Age and Early Iron Age material, thus including the Late Cypriot III (c. 1200–1050 BC) and Cypro-Geometric I–III (c. 1050–750 BC) phases. Most of it comes from tombs at Palaepaphos: Skales in the west, a striking testimony to the site's early importance; there are a few items from Kition and its neighbourhood on the south-east coast, but otherwise only two doubtful items from the Philistine site of Ashkelon, definitely early, and Kilise Tepe in Cilicia, which may not precede 700 BC. The number of items is not great, but the variety of scripts and languages is remarkable: apart from certainly Cypro-Minoan and non-Greek inscriptions, notably on a bronze bowl from T. 235, a single-burial tomb of Cypro-Geometric I date (c. 1050–950 BC), there are some that might be either Cypro-Minoan or Cypro-Greek, including the famous bronze obelos from T. 49 (the source of several inscribed items), also of Cypro-Geometric I date, whose inscription would read *o-pe-le-ta-u* (Opheltāu), the genitive form of a Greek name, in Cypro-Greek. Further, there is a jug of local ware from T. 69 that has a painted inscription in some form of West Semitic script, not necessarily Phoenician; it is of Cypro-Geometric II–III date, with a preference for an earlier dating (c. 900–825? BC), and is clearly of considerable importance in the whole history of the poorly documented development of alphabetic writing in the Levant, as Egetmeyer's discussion shows. In general, the material covered has relevance to a series of major themes, as is brought out by Egetmeyer's final section on 'syllabaries and city-kingdoms', which considers the context in which the Cypro-Greek script was developed.

Overall, a collection that provides much food for thought.

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Flouda, G. 2015. Materiality and script: constructing a narrative. On the Minoan inscribed axe from the Arkalochori cave. *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici* N.S. 1: 43–56.

Petrakis, V. 2014. A tale of system reform: the genesis of the Third Palace Period Aegean literate administrations. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 57.1: 129–30.

**Julie Hruby and Debra Trusty (eds). *From Cooking Vessels to Cultural Practices in the Late Bronze Age Aegean*. pp. vii + 173. 116 b/w illustrations, 8 tables, 8 colour illustrations. 2017. Oxford & Philadelphia: Oxbow Books. ISBN 978-1-78570-632-5 paperback £38.00. ISBN 978-1-78570-633-5 e-publication £ 19.00.**

This book had its origin in a panel held at the 11th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in January 2014; the papers given there, suitably adapted for publication, have been added to by contributions from scholars working on comparable material. All chapters are substantial, and apart from the short introduction and finale all are illustrated with a range of photographs, drawings, tables and sometimes thin-sections. It is well-presented, with a colourful cover showing, on the front, modern replicas of Minoan-style cooking pots, made by Jerolyn Morrison, one of the contributors to this book, in use.

The focus is on vessels used specifically for cooking, as distinct from other types that may also be classified among 'domestic' wares, used e.g. for storage (temporary or long-term), heating or lighting. As the editors' introduction reminds us, there has been a general tendency in Aegean studies to give less attention to wares defined as domestic or coarse than to the finer quality, often decorated wares that are such a notable feature of Aegean pottery more or less throughout the Bronze Age. These have been studied in often exhaustive detail for the information they can provide on chronology, links between different regions and cultures, and artistic development, especially in the absence of work in more elaborate materials. In contrast, coarse/domestic wares have attracted very little attention unless preserved completely or in large sections; generally, if referred to at all, they are lumped together for a few brief comments, which helps to give the impression that they did not form a significant part of pottery production. It is striking

that Mervyn Popham could write, in discussing the Minoan Unexplored Mansion material, that, although 'kitchen pots' were frequently found in houses of Minoan settlements, they had been little illustrated and there was no consolidated study, although Betancourt<sup>1</sup> was a 'useful preliminary report'.<sup>2</sup> The survey of scholarship by Trusty (Ch.2) underlines this lack of interest, which is particularly remarkable because, as becomes clear from this book, the Minoan tradition had a major influence on developments in pottery in the Aegean as a whole in the Middle and early Late Bronze Age.

The editors offer trenchant criticism of this traditional approach. As one who has worked in 'the pot shed' at Lefkandi, Knossos and Nichoria and on the material from the Cambridge-Bradford (later Durham) Boeotia Survey, and written on Aegean, especially Mycenaean, pottery extensively, the reviewer cannot deny the essential justice of their criticisms. It is undoubtedly regrettable, to say the least, that 'coarse' pottery (and also, often, much plain, especially the rougher versions) has so often been discarded with little if any attempt at analysis or even rough quantification, so that our information about the 'pottery industry' in various periods and regions is seriously skewed. But the logistical problems involved in storing the vast quantities of pottery that excavation on any scale produces do entail that limits have to be set on the amount stored, and, inevitably, featureless body sherds in copiously represented plain and coarse fabrics, such as will constitute the bulk of any ordinary deposit (in the reviewer's experience), are most likely to be discarded. But the wholesale discarding of 'local' jars, as apparently at Ayia Irini, unless a whole profile was obtained (p. 61), may be regarded as symptomatic of a general attitude.

Again, it is to be expected that, when resources are limited (as they generally are), they will be directed to study that seems most likely to yield useful results, and we have to recognise that early excavators did not generally give priority to answering the kinds of question that studying cooking pots is likely to throw light on. It is too sweeping to say (as on p. 2) that into the 1970s Aegean prehistorians focused primarily on excavating palaces and tombs. The first prehistoric excavation by the British School at Athens was the town site of Phylakopi on Melos, the excavation of the town sites Palaikastro and Gournia take their place alongside those of Knossos and Phaistos as major contributions to our knowledge of Minoan civilisation in the early twentieth

century, and several non-palatial settlements were excavated on the mainland in the decades before World War II (notably Korakou, Zygouries, Eutresis and Asine, all cited for their comments on domestic wares in Trusty's Ch. 2). Much attention has also been paid in more recent years to non-palatial sites, and fairly ordinary 'town houses' at several palatial sites, on Crete, various islands and the mainland. But it is true that up to the present major funding has most often been attracted to the investigation of palatial and other evidently prominent sites, and there has been a marked tendency in specialised studies to focus on the most obviously interesting and attractive material, despite Harriet Boyd Hawes' early emphasis on the value of considering 'the humblest articles of use'.<sup>3</sup> This means that domestic life in the Aegean Bronze Age at the ordinary level remains relatively poorly documented and understood. Essentially, we know more about how ordinary people were buried (although there are still large gaps in our information) than how they lived, even in the second half of the Late Bronze Age when our sources of evidence are most abundant.

However, whether a concentration on cooking pots to the extent advocated by Galaty in Ch. 12 will go very far towards improving the situation remains open to question. Supporters of more traditional approaches might point out that stratified Late Bronze Age pottery deposits are dominated by plain undecorated ware of various qualities, belonging to vessels that have a wide range of functions. Pottery in 'coarse' fabrics is much less common, and pieces attributable specifically to cooking pots constitute only a proportion of the 'coarse' class. Is it justifiable to preserve *all* cooking pot material and spend a lot of time and resources on it, probably at the expense of studying the other classes of pottery? The reviewer emphasises 'resources' because, once pieces have been quantified and assigned as far as possible to shapes, other useful information, such as the particular qualities, composition and origin of their fabrics, has to be obtained by scientific tests which are time-consuming and relatively expensive, so can only be applied to select samples.

The studies in this book go some way towards offering answers, but the reviewer feels that it is a major drawback that there is relatively so little focus on the Minoan tradition. Although there are repeated comments on the appearance of Minoan types and 'Minoanisation' of the pottery repertoire, there is only one study of developments at a Cretan site over the bulk of the Late Bronze Age, Mochlos in east Crete (Ch. 9, Morrison), and one comparing

<sup>1</sup> Betancourt 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Popham 1984: 174, with fn. 124 on 277.

<sup>3</sup> Cited Dickinson 1994: 2.

Cretan developments in Late Minoan III C with contemporary developments in Italy (Ch. 10, Borgna and Levi). Both are concerned as much with cooking installations and the settings in which cooking might take place as with the pots used. Morrison's account is exemplary in its coverage of the sources of food available and methods and places of cookery, while Borgna and Levi develop an interesting argument for the appearance of new styles of cooking across a wider area than the Aegean. But the survey of scholarship on cooking pots in Ch. 2 (Trusty) finds no occasion to mention work on the Minoan tradition until Betancourt<sup>4</sup>. (I am grateful to Prof. P.M. Warren for many useful comments about Minoan deposits). Essentially, it seems that familiarity, from the universal appearance at Cretan sites of a range of well-known types like the tripod cooking pot, has bred lack of interest, and, while Minoan influence on the decorated pottery in many Aegean islands and the southern mainland from the Middle Bronze Age onwards has long been recognised and studied, the equally interesting but generally less prominent evidence for Minoan influence on domestic pottery has not attracted a comparable level of attention until the studies represented by chapters in this book.

Most of these chapters are focused closely on the local changes in the range of types of pot and modes of production over the Late Bronze Age, considering evidence from several mainland sites (Ch. 4, Gulizio and Shelmerdine on Iklaina; Ch. 5, Lis on Mitrou, Tsoungiza and the Menelaion), also from Kolonna on Aigina (Ch. 6, Gauss, Kiriatzi, Lindblom, Lis and Morrison), Ayia Irini on Kea (Ch. 7, Gorogianni, Abell and Hilditch), and Serraglio on Kos (Ch. 8, Vitale and Morrison, which is a detailed discussion of the interplay between foreign and local traditions in pottery types and production). In Ch. 3, Hruby discusses the possible development of an 'haute cuisine' on the mainland, as seen in changes in food styles identified through the appearance of two specific types, 'griddles' and 'souvlaki trays'. Finally, in Ch. 11, Jung considers changes in Cyprus, where the native tradition was largely replaced by one deriving from the Aegean in the last stages of the Bronze Age.

All the chapters mentioned are full of useful and interesting discussions and comments, but can general conclusions be drawn on the basis of this book, recognising that it is a pioneer study and cannot be expected to provide the last word on any specific topic? First, perhaps, is that the production of cooking pots in a fabric that would withstand

repeated thermal shocks is by no means a simple matter, but rather something that requires a degree of technical knowledge and specialisation (cf. e.g. p. 21). Lis's comments on Middle Helladic domestic pottery (pp. 39–40) suggest that this was at a low level on the mainland in that period, but this is still a class likely to have been produced by part-time specialists and not in literally any household. The evidence for the widespread popularity on the mainland and Kea of cooking pots produced on Aigina indicates that, as later, there was demand for a high-quality product.

The second is that the category of cooking pots includes a relatively small range of shapes, most limited on the mainland, where it is dominated by forms of open-mouthed jar, but wider in Crete, where from a very early stage the tripod cooking pot became a basic constituent of the range. This shape, very fittingly prominent on the book's cover, was already known on Kos in the Early Bronze Age (pp. 76, 92), suggesting that it has an ultimately Anatolian origin, but the idea of using three feet to raise a vessel above the hot coals of the cooking fire and thus expose it to less thermal shock seems to have become established in Crete in Early Minoan I (p. 59), and its appearance outside Crete may reasonably be attributed to Minoan 'influence'. The basic tripod shape was an wide-mouthed jar, produced in a variety of sizes, but the idea was also used for small jugs and trays, and these spread, so that a full range is found at Ayia Irini on Kea in the Middle Bronze Age (p. 61), when the jars and trays also appear at Kolonna on Aigina (p. 49); they form part of the recognised 'Minoanising' tradition widely established in the southern Aegean by the Late Bronze Age, appearing at Miletus as well as on several islands. Tripod feet that probably belong to jars have also been found, rarely, before the end of the Middle Bronze Age at some mainland sites, particularly in the south Peloponnese, and the type was to become a well-represented Mycenaean form, though varying in its degree of prominence at different sites and disappearing or becoming rare at many in the later stages of the Late Bronze Age.

This might be thought surprising, since it represents a style of cooking that exposed pots to less thermal shock and so gave them greater longevity, but it may be that potters were increasingly driven by demand to concentrate on the speedy production of standardised types, whose use may also have required less time to produce food ready to consume (the time element involved in both pot production and cooking does not receive much attention in this book). Large forms of the tripod jar may well have had a specialised use, for feasts

<sup>4</sup> Betancourt 1980.

intended for relatively large gatherings rather than everyday cooking, and so probably had 'elite' overtones, which may be one of the reasons why the type became rarer in later Mycenaean times, when the social hierarchy had probably become more established and competitiveness for status more contained. In Crete, however, although its history clearly varied in different parts, the tripod cooking pot seems to have been socially embedded enough to be widespread still in the final stages of the Bronze Age.

Outside Crete, tripod cooking pots and other elements of the Minoan tradition are found alongside local forms in the early Late Bronze Age. Later, a more specifically 'Mycenaean' tradition seems to develop, not merely at mainland sites but on Kos, where all types continued to be produced in local fabrics but there may be evidence of Mycenaean influence on wheel-throwing techniques and so on the types produced (p. 93). Some of the more specialised types that appear, such as cooking trays and dishes, also seem to be Minoan in origin, but the 'griddle' and types associated with grilling such as spit-rests seem to appear earliest at mainland sites. These too may have 'elite' associations, but the precise function and method of use of the 'griddle' have been a question of debate, though much elucidated by Hruby's account, which is helped by some useful experimental archaeology. This is also deployed to considerable effect in Morrison's discussion of the Mochlos material, which helps to bring out what may be a fundamental distinction between a 'Minoan' preference for stews and a 'Mycenaean' for roasting and grilling (especially p. 114). This provides a reminder that the preferred types of cooking pot will reflect the kinds of food preferred in the society of which they are characteristic.

But a third important conclusion to be drawn from the various accounts is that the introduction of 'foreign' types of pottery, and so the types of food that they were used to produce, need have no bearing on the arrival of foreign *people*, except possibly potters who were skilled in making these specific types of pot. The careful analysis of the different elements in the cooking pot range at Ayia Irini, for example, provides further arguments against the suggestion that it was a Minoan 'colony'; the reviewer suspects that a similar analysis of the range at Akrotiri on Thera would have a similar result. These and other cases also provide evidence of the various histories that different types may have; some can be absorbed and help to form a new tradition, while others, used for a while, may ultimately be rejected. Only when, as in Cyprus, there seems to be a major replacement of a previous native tradition by a new, 'Mycenaean'

one, not only in cooking pots and the hearth styles that were appropriate to them but in the fine wares, does it seem reasonable to suspect the arrival of a major new element in the population, and even here the adoption of the new types is only partial at some sites (p. 142). Interestingly, tripod pots did not become established (nor in other regions where a 'Mycenaean' or Aegean migration has been postulated), indicating that what was happening will have been more complex than the traditional view of an 'invasion' or 'migration'. Some settlements may have been dominated by a new population, but in others display of knowledge of exotic novelties may have been seen as a way to achieve status, or simply reflect attraction to and appreciation of what was foreign.

Overall, this book is to be welcomed as a very interesting and thought-provoking collection of studies that offer ideas about historical and social development as well as information on local sequences and the history of particular types. The reviewer hopes for further work of this kind.

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Betancourt, P.P. 1980. *Cooking Vessels from Minoan Kommos. A Preliminary Report*. Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles.

Dickinson, O., 1994. *The Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Popham, M.R. 1984. *The Minoan Unexplored Mansion at Knossos*. London: British School of Archaeology at Athens. Thames and Hudson.

**Iphiyenia Tournavitou. *The Wall Paintings of the West House at Mycenae*. pp. xxiii+190, 39 figs, 39 pls. 2017. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press, Prehistory Monographs 54. ISBN 978-1-93153-488-8 £55.00.**

This book is an exceptionally full and thorough publication by Iphiyenia Tournavitou (with some further contributions by others) of wall painting fragments from the West House at Mycenae, the westernmost of the group of four buildings that lies to the west of the Mycenae Citadel and to the south of Grave Circle B. This group consists of the House of Shields, the House of the Oil Merchant and the House of Sphinxes as well as the West House, and is sometimes otherwise known collectively