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Robert B. Koehl (ed.). *Studies in Aegean Art and Culture. A New York Aegean Bronze Age Colloquium in Memory of Ellen N. Davis*. pp. xvii+158, 65 colour and b/w illustrations. 2016. Philadelphia (PA): INSTAP Academic Press. ISBN 978-1-93153-486-4 paperback $36.

This is a publication, in paperback format, of papers that were mostly presented at a special session of the New York Aegean Bronze Age Colloquium, held to honour the memory of Ellen Davis. Although her output was not very extensive, it included studies of considerable importance apart from her *magnum opus* on Aegean Bronze Age vessels of precious metal, and several of the papers are clearly intended to complement these studies and carry them further. The papers vary considerably in length, in breadth of topic, and in the amount of illustration provided, but all have something interesting to say.

Weingarten offers a well-illustrated account of the parallels in clay from Crete of the Gournia silver kantharos, still the only Middle Minoan vessel of precious metal extant, and strengthens Davis's argument that the shape is originally an Anatolian metal form, though the Minoan versions, all from east Cretan sites, are considerably smaller than the commonest Anatolian forms, several of which are shown. The chronological problem that worried Davis about this link can be resolved, since on a revised chronology no Minoan versions of this shape can be shown to appear in pre-MM II contexts; thus, a correlation with Kültepe Ib, where the shape is common, is perfectly possible. Weingarten offers comments on the shape's possible cult function(s), but not on the context in which originals might have come to Crete; the reviewer would suggest that one or more Anatolian metal vessels might have come as something like diplomatic gifts, in the context of the strengthening contacts, now becoming evident at Miletus particularly, between Minoan Crete and western Anatolia.

Wiener returns to the famous gold cups found in the Vapheio tholos, that Davis used as a focus for her discussion of Aegean precious metal vessels and distinction of 'Minoan' and 'Mycenaean' traditions of production.[1] Here the reviewer should declare an interest, since he has commented critically on Davis's distinction and offered an alternative interpretation.[2] Wiener has his own criticisms (p. 18), but is more concerned with examining why the personage buried with a pair of very finely decorated gold cups from different metalworking traditions, and a matching pair in plain silver, should have wanted such pairs. He relates this to a tradition of burying pairs of drinking vessels, going back to what seem to be a genuine pair of gold sauceboats, reflecting the importance of host-guest relationships. But there is not much evidence for this tradition in the MH period, and it is much commoner to find, in rich Mycenaean burials, drinking vessels

[1] Davis 1977.

[2] Dickinson 1994: 140, 142. Unfortunately, the beginning of the first relevant paragraph on page 140 is missing in the first printing; it should read, 'The evidence assembled by Davis for two distinct craft traditions is certainly impressive …', thereafter as printed. This may have been corrected in later reprints.

in precious metal (often gold), either single or in varied groups of larger size, as in several Dendra tombs (whose vessels were also covered in detail by Davis). Wiener tries to downdate the decorated pottery goblet (usefully illustrated, fig. 2.6) which is the closest guide to the date of the deposition of the cups and much other finery in the tholos cist, but the reviewer disagrees. There is no reason to date it beyond the LH IIA–IIB transition, if so late, for the decoration places it very much at this time, as consultation of Mountjoy would have shown.[3] Wiener would like to associate the acquisition of the original 'Minoan' gold and silver cups with the fabled 'Mycenaean conquest of Crete', as loot or prizes; sceptical of this simplistic interpretation of the collapse of Minoan civilisation, the reviewer wonders whether, again, these were diplomatic gifts, reflecting the close links with Crete to be seen in a variety of finds of this and somewhat later date in the Vapheio tholos and at Ayios Vasileios, where the early 'palace' has distinctly Minoan features.

Kopcke's paper takes up Davis's speculation on the possible Transylvanian origin of the spectacular quantities of gold in the Shaft Graves. This includes criticisms, made with a light touch, of Davis's concept (implausible to the reviewer also) that Crete was short of gold, but begins, as Davis did, from the idea that the Perşinari 'dagger', the most striking find in a Romanian hoard, was an imitation of an Aegean sword of a known Shaft Graves type (but the Grave Delta sword with which it is compared, fig. 3.2, is not Type B, incorrectly termed 'Type 2' here, but Type A).[4] However, the whole basis for associating this and other material with the Shaft Graves period specifically is undermined by the recent demonstration that the blade was originally a halberd, which only later had a hilt fitted to it, apparently to make it look more 'Mycenaean';[5] this could have been done at a considerably later date than the Shaft Graves. So, too, the association of the Vălčitrăn treasure with this period, on the basis of the kantharos, is questionable, since the cups with which it was found are much later.[6] To sum up, the evidence for Mycenaean contacts with the northern Balkans has certainly increased, but remains relatively scanty, and it fits best with the phases when the Mycenaean civilisation was more developed. How the elite of Mycenae came to have so much gold at their disposal requires a different explanation.

Still on the topic of metalwork, Betancourt, Ferrence and Muhly draw attention to various items from the Petras cemetery in eastern Crete, ranging in date over the Prepalatial and Old Palace Periods, which have 'northern' connections, some clearly Cycladic, some of pendant types, 'ring idols' and 'anchors', that are found not only in the Cyclades but in the Balkans and Anatolia. The metals used include silver, arsenical copper, and an alloy of the two, identified in the pendants, all plausibly of Cycladic origin, and as a group the material adds significantly to the evidence for a long-standing connection between the Cyclades (where the 'ring idol' had been known since late Neolithic times) and eastern Crete.

Most of the other papers show a shift in focus to representation, whether on frescoes and vases or in the three-dimensional form of figures. Doumas blends commentary on human representations from the Cyclades in both these forms with an account of social development over the Cycladic Bronze Age. This incorporates themes that he has aired before, e.g. on the 'bourgeois' nature of the Akrotiri 'mansions' and their contents, and characteristically shows a marked tendency to avoid 'ritual' interpretations and focus on the economic and social sides of life. The reviewer suspects that these were as intertwined with ritual as the lives of the historical Greek descendants of the Cycladic islanders. Vlachopoulos discusses the extremely large and elaborate frescoes, patterned with interlinked spirals and relief lozenges filled with rosettes, found on the third floor of Xeste 3 at Akrotiri, and the evidence for their deliberate and often subtle colour contrasts, in which Egyptian blue and true purple have been identified as among the pigments used. Striking reconstructions of how these frescoes would originally have appeared are offered. In a way, this offers a contrast to Doumas's account, in emphasising how much trouble was taken with non-representational patterns; it is hard not to wonder why. Vlachopoulos makes cautious mention of possible supernatural and ritual associations.

Shank discusses the representation of water in miniature frescoes, particularly those from Akrotiri, but also examples from Ayia Irini (Kea), Epano Zakros, and Tel Kabri. Some of these conventions can be traced in related forms on seals and also the Siege Rhyton from Shaft Grave V (thought to be a Minoan product by Davis); they include quite sophisticated attempts to suggest the movement of the sea, working the plaster into light relief to suggest waves and using white splashes to suggest their foaming caps. It would be interesting to know

[3] Mountjoy 1999.
[4] Mylonas 1973: 85.
[5] Palincaş 2007: 232.
[6] Palincaş 2007: 235.

whether any of these conventions survived as late as the newly identified 'naval fresco' at Pylos.

Jones offers a comprehensive study of the remains of the well-known faience 'snake goddesses' from the Temple Repositories at Knossos, which demonstrates conclusively how much Evans had restored, and how misleading some elements of his restorations are. She offers new reconstructions that suit the actual remains much better and show that each statuette differed from the others in features of hair and dress.

Koehl, the editor of the book, contributes a paper which will surely have a very marked effect on our perception of Minoan civilisation. He and Davis collaborated in the past on presenting an increasingly plausible case for a system of age-grades, identified by different hair styles particularly, through which Minoan males and females passed in their journey to adulthood. Here, Koehl builds on his previous argument (from the Ayia Triada 'Chieftain Cup') that one stage of this for males was a rite of passage and initiation, at a stage of later youth or young adulthood, that included homosexual liaisons between youths and men much like those reported of Cretan society much later by Ephorus, and evident in well-known dedications of 8th-7th century date from the Kato Syme shrine. The principal new evidence cited consists of the scenes on a gold ring from Pylos that is surely of Minoan origin and two sealings from Epano Zakros that seem to have been made by other such rings. There seems very little doubt that these show young males with erect penises (carefully examined and verified by other specialists) and, in one case, what certainly looks like anal intercourse between a robed, bearded man and a more youthful male. The hypothesis is very hard to dismiss, although details might be argued about, and a link might be perceived with the martial and agonistic side of Minoan male life argued for by Molloy.[7] The reviewer would suspect that this was part of the lives of an upper class or elite rather than the whole population, as seems to have been the case with the more structured types of later Greek homosexuality like that in Crete, and sees it as a salutary reminder that Minoan civilisation may have been much stranger, and more different from that of any of the great Eastern civilisations, let alone the Mycenaean, than we have tended to imagine.

Finally, Palaima offers a largely philological discussion of the 'ideology of the Mycenaean ruler', taking his cue from a well-known paper by Davis on the 'missing ruler'.[8] In discussing the lack of ruler iconography in Minoan art she alluded to the shortage of such evidence for Mycenaean kings also, although these were recognisable in the Linear B texts in the term *wanax* (hereafter written *wanaks*, following Palaima) and derivatives like *wanakteros/on* and the female form *wanassa* that survived into Homeric and later Greek. Palaima asks some very important questions about the *wanaks* (p. 136): how did he come to be, where did the term come from and what did it mean, what was involved in the office and how was it passed on? But unfortunately, many of these questions go unanswered. Establishing that the term is unlikely to have an Indo-European origin must entail that we cannot know what it means – and the mere substitution in the mythical tradition of the name Iphigeneia for Iphianassa, named in the Iliad as one of the daughters of Agamemnon, is a pretty slender basis on which to attempt to divine its meaning! While the paper is supposed to deal with textual, i.e. Linear B data, the other words whose origin and significance is discussed, *megaron*, *thronos* and *skēptron*, are either poorly represented in the texts or not at all (*skēptron*). There are some indications that the term 'textual data' is allowed to include Homeric references, a version of the 'Mycenaean interpretation' of Homer with which the reviewer has no sympathy at all; this allows the citing of the famous description of Agamemnon's sceptre (Iliad 2.101–108), which has to be assumed to be a memory from Mycenaean times. But the whole paper is filled with assumptions, including the absolutely basic one that there was a unified '*wanaks* ideology'; it is indicated that all 'palatial' Mycenaean states were ruled by *wanaktes*, who ruled from palaces in which the *megaron* was absolutely central, containing a ceremonial hearth and emplacement for the *thronos* where the *wanaks* sat in state. It is a beguiling picture, and it might well have been true for some important centres, some of the time. But there are palaces where '*megaron* complexes' have refused to be found, like Thebes and Ayios Vasileios, where the monumental complex is at least as old as the first major structures at Tiryns. At Tiryns too, it now seems that there was an earlier structure, under the LH IIIA *megaron*, of different type; a stairway and upper terrace have been identified.[9] Also, the available evidence from the formative period of Mycenaean culture does not readily support any idea of single monarchical figures .[10] But Palaima offers no clue, in this paper at least, to how such a position might have become established; it is certainly unlikely to represent any inherited concepts, such as might be embedded in

[7] Molloy 2012.

[8] Davis 1995.

[9] Maran 2017.

[10] Cf. Dickinson *et al.* 2012: 185–186.

linguistic terms, when in the Middle Helladic period there is barely any evidence for dominant 'chiefs', let alone kings.

Certainly, the position seems to have become established later. We know from Hittite texts that by the 13th century Ahhiyawa (not mentioned by Palaima), quite probably the state dominated by Mycenae itself, had a single ruler whom the Hittite king was prepared to correspond with as effectively an equal. There are those who would argue that this was, in fact, the sole *wanaks* and that references in the texts from different sites are always to this person, to whom local rulers were subordinate. The reviewer does not believe this; but he does believe that the development of the hierarchy that can be reconstructed most clearly from the Pylos tablets, which may not have been duplicated in all Mycenaean 'palatial' states, could have been an extremely complicated process. It is not clear how much light can be shed on the process by the study, largely unrelated to archaeological data, of what may have been significant words in the ideology supporting this hierarchy.

Despite his critical comments, the reviewer welcomes this collection, as offering considerable food for thought on a whole variety of important topics.

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Jana Mynářová, Pavel Onderka and Peter Pavúk (eds). *There and Back Again – The Crossroads II. Proceedings of an International Conference Held in Prague, September 15-18, 2014.* pp. 555, b/w (occasionally colour) illustrations, tables, maps in almost all papers. 2015. Prague: Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts. ISBN 978-80-7308-575-9 hardback $123.

(all indications of date in this review are BCE unless designated otherwise. The terms Palestine and Syria are used in their ancient sense, like Mesopotamia and Anatolia, and are not intended to have any modern reference at all)

This publication in a handsome-looking hardback volume of the papers given at a recent conference in Prague is large (24 papers) and diffuse, but has Egypt and its 'rich and complex relations with the Levant, the Aegean and the Sudan' in the 2nd and 1st millennia, particularly the later Bronze Age, as its central theme. The majority of the papers concentrate on texts, which can provide valuable evidence even when material objects or artistic representations are the subject of the paper. They offer a salutary reminder of the sheer range and quality of documentation available from fully literate civilisations like those of Egypt and the wider Near East, and make a striking contrast with Aegean prehistory, which depends, for lack of written sources, on hypotheses that are always liable to change as a result of new archaeological discoveries and/or to be reinterpreted in the light of new theories and approaches. Of course, the same can happen with ancient texts, and a major drawback is their tendency to concentrate on a limited range of topics that are not necessarily those that we most want to know about; but they can provide a historical and social dimension to the interpretation of the past in a way that the most refined analyses of archaeological material simply cannot match, as several papers demonstrate.

Although the conference was held in Prague, all papers are in English and are well presented,