

Beyond Thalassocracies: Understanding Processes of Minoanisation and Mycenaeanisation in the Aegean. Edited by Evi Gorogianni, Peter Pavúk and Luca Girella. 280mm. Pp x + 224, ill., maps. Oxbow Books, Oxford and Philadelphia, 2016. ISBN 9781785702037. £45 (hbk).

Aegean Bronze Age archaeology has long struggled with labels and concepts inherited from its origins in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As the editors of this volume note in the Introduction, Sir Arthur Evans's development of the ancient Greek idea of a thalassocracy in the time of King Minos is difficult to disentangle from a British imperialist viewpoint. As they also note, Evans's favoured label 'Minoan' carries implications of a unified Crete in the Bronze Age, the ideal platform from which to conquer the rest of the Aegean. 'Minoanisation' and 'Mycenaeanisation' are ostensibly more neutral ways to describe the spread of Minoan and Mycenaean material culture across the Aegean in the Middle to Late Bronze Age but still raise questions of local agency versus external imposition. The aim of this volume, based on a 2013 conference session, is to examine these as processes involving the exchange of objects and people by focussing on areas of the Aegean which underwent both. Some of the papers are regional in scope, with very useful syntheses of evidence from the northeast Aegean (Girella and Pavúk) and the Aegean coast of southwest Anatolia (Mokrišová). Other authors focus on particular sites with long-running excavations and deep stratigraphy where the effect of Minoanisation and Mycenaeanisation can be compared in the same place. The papers on Ayia Irini on Kea (Gorogianni), Phylakopi on Melos (Earle) and Miletus (Raymond *et al.*) all provide concise summaries of the latest research at these sites while addressing the theme of the volume, as do two papers on particular islands, Naxos (Vlachopoulos) and Kos (Vitale). Slightly different in approach are two papers on the material evidence for technological transmission: ceramic production (Abell and Hilditch) and weaving (Cutler) and it is these papers which are perhaps most successful in locating the mobility of people because these techniques require a long apprenticeship. There are also two papers about Mycenaeanisation alone: Feuer concentrates on Thessaly and Galaty discusses Epirus and Albania in one of the summary papers at the end.

Though the majority of papers discuss both Minoanisation and Mycenaeanisation, authors often struggle to see these as comparable processes. For instance, at Ayia Irini, Abell and Hilditch make a useful contrast between the local production of Minoan (and non-Minoan) ceramics and the consumption, but not imitation, of imported Mycenaean ceramics. One of the main strengths of the volume is that it engages in a lively internal debate about the usefulness of the terms Minoanisation and Mycenaeanisation and their meaning alongside a discussion of the data: as more than one author notes, they are simplifications of much more complex phenomena which might not be possible to compare directly. And as the editors point out in the Introduction, they are also partly rooted in different theoretical approaches, which are evident in the volume: post-colonial theory, with ideas of hybridisation has informed recent debates about Minoanisation whereas the core-periphery relations of world systems theory are more prevalent in discussions of Mycenaeanisation. This in turn raises the question of the balance of papers: from a postcolonial point of view the papers in the volume cover an important contact zone as the editors intend but they also only focus on areas which have traditionally been viewed as on the periphery of Minoan Crete and/or Mycenaean Greece. Knappett, in the other summary paper,

suggests that Minoanisation could be seen as 'a distributed multi-sited network process' (p. 203) but in the absence of papers about the Minoanisation of Crete itself or the mainland, or the Mycenaeanisation of Crete, all of which are only discussed in passing, this volume instead leaves these areas by implication as an intact core. Another omission is Macedonia, where Mycenaean pottery was adopted and imitated within an apparently non-palatial society, which might have provided a different perspective on whether Mycenaeanisation was always an elite phenomenon as some papers suggest. Papers about the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly Cyprus, would have helped assess the importance, and visibility, of Mycenaean pottery compared with Minoan pottery as part of interregional trade networks. But such selectivity is an inherent part of any conference volume; here the editors have collected together an excellent set of papers, bookended by a thorough introduction and two challenging summary papers, which present useful evidence while engaging critically with important questions.

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