

for feasting and rituals. I find this surprising. Valamoti indeed identified the production of wine in a large jar (estimated to hold 130 liters) found in a burnt house at Late Neolithic Dikili Tash. This suggests that the production of wine from wild vines may have been an independent innovation in northern Greece. But the recipe, as shown by this exceptional find, is simple: pressed fruits, pips and juice together will initiate fermentation through the yeast present in the skin. Why thus would wine remain a luxury? Possibly because it remained for long collected from wild vines, since there is no reliable way to tell apart wild and cultivated vines from the morphology of the pips. It was, nevertheless, the main alcoholic beverage in Prehistoric Greece. As someone familiar with beer, I was surprised to realize that beer brewing was so rare in Prehistoric Greece, limited to a few Bronze Age sites in northern Greece. Valamoti raises the possibility that beer drinking and wine drinking groups may have been different, and of different origins, maintaining different traditions.

A second important theme is the recurrent contrast between Neolithic and Bronze Age practices. The Bronze Age plant repertory confirms a high degree of inter-connectivity and witnesses the introduction, for food or fodder, of a large range of new cultivars, introduced from the West, from Central Europe and from the East, sometimes from very far away, such as Celtic bean, Spanish vetchling, Cyprus vetch, opium poppy, mustard, gold of pleasure, and many others. Most striking in this respect are millet, originating from Central Asia and possibly introduced from China along a "silk road", and *Lallemantia*, also from Central Asia, which bears fruit rich in oil and can be used as a medicinal plant. Valamoti notes that the earliest finds of millet are from Thasos (Skala Sotiros), where circum-Pontic influences are perceptible, and suggests it was brought through inhabitants of the Caspian steppes, while *Lallemantia* appears at the same time as tin-bronze, also of north-eastern origin.

The hypothesis that these plants would have been introduced by foreigners that settled in Greece, remained there, and kept their traditional meals and recipes, is in line with the main argument of the book. From the very beginning of her story, i.e., in the Early Neolithic, Valamoti insists on the unequal geographic distribution of the different wheat species. In Northern Greece, *Triticum timopheevii*, until recently known as the "new glume wheat" predominates in some sites, einkorn in others, despite the time-consuming work necessary to process these glume wheats. Conversely, emmer and the bread wheats, free-threshing wheats,

predominate in southern Greece. As she considers that the various preferences in wheat species were probably unrelated to environmental conditions, she suggests that they were related to the different origins of these first farmers and constitute identity markers. Similar preferences, as well as interaction with the local hunter-gatherers may explain why the various "Neolithic packages" introduced from the Near East were consciously modified: chickpea and Celtic bean are virtually absent in the Neolithic. Conversely, grass pea is rare in the Near and Middle East but very common in Greece and Bulgaria: it may have been locally domesticated.

Marked local preferences continue in the Bronze Age, and concern not only the plant species, but also how they were processed and the cooking equipment or the pots used for the different foodstuffs. For instance, large concentrations of almonds are found only in southern Greece, whereas concentrations of acorns are more characteristic of northern Greece, Cornelian cherries are only eaten in northern Greece, there is no lining of the hearths with pebbles or sherds in Crete, alcoholic drinks were consumed in northern Greece already by the Neolithic but only appear in the Bronze Age in southern Greece, etc. Consequently, the picture of Neolithic and Bronze Age Greece provided by this "journey" is that of an increasingly diversified country, increasingly connected with close and far-off countries, and peopled by increasing diversified cultural and social groups. That these insights could be gained solely by the study of plant foods (*senso lato*) is a remarkable achievement. It is undoubtedly the best demonstration that archaeobotany, as viewed and practiced by Valamoti, is indeed a most powerful entry into past cultural traditions as these are expressed in enduring culinary traditions.

CATHERINE PERLÈS,
UMR TEMPS MAE, 21 ALLÉE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ
92023 NANTERRE CEDEX
catherine.perles@cnrs.fr

David Michael Smith, William G. Cavanagh and Angelos Papadopoulos, *The Wider Island of Pelops. Studies in Prehistoric Aegean Pottery in Honour of Professor Christopher Mee*. pp. 278, 146 colour and b/w ills, 5 tables (pb). Oxford: Archaeopress, 2019. ISBN 978-1-80327-328-0, paperback £50.

The core of this collection of 17 contributions is made up of papers presented at a conference organised by two of Chris Mee's former students and held at the British School at Athens in 2017 to honour his memory; other papers were offered by friends and colleagues who had worked with him. The result may be a bit more wide-ranging than the original conference was, but this is a positive outcome, for despite the impression that might be given by the secondary title of the book, the majority of them are concerned with much more than just pottery, often presenting essentially new material of considerable interest. A useful preface by the editors summarises their topics and where they fit into the Neolithic-Bronze Age sequence of the Aegean.

Almost half the papers are concerned with Laconian sites, including one that is particularly to be welcomed, by Aris Papayiannis, on the discovery at a site whose toponym is Mouhteika, but is labelled Karavas after the modern town c. 6 km north of Sparta, below a Late Helladic (hereafter LH) IIIB2-IIIC level, a habitation level producing a considerable amount of material that may be designated Early Helladic (hereafter EH) III. This period, generally allowed some two centuries (2200–2000 BC), has been barely identifiable in the whole south Peloponnese before, though well represented further north and also in central Greece; but clearly the gap in the evidence reflects the fact that even at excavated sites the representation of different phases can be patchy and some phases can be far more recognisable in surface material than others. The material found at Karavas offers a better idea of what to look for in Laconia.

Other papers that deal with essentially new material concern an underwater EH II settlement identified near the Lambayanna beach a few hundred metres north of the Franchthi cave (Julien Beck, Patrizia Birchler Emery and Despina Koutsoumba), and the recently discovered peak sanctuary site at Leska in western Kythera (Mercurios Georgiadis). At Lambayanna the evidence for a fortification suggests a major settlement, and the recovery of clay roof tile fragments among the wide range of finds emphasises how increasingly common these are becoming in EH II contexts, while at Leska the range of finds seems to represent a rather different pattern of activity from that at the now well-known peak of Ayios Georgios sto vouno, near the major site of Kastri, with little evidence for the offering of votives but much of drinking and eating, though not of cooking at the site. The evidence of Ayios Georgios is also drawn on considerably in Iphigeneia Tournavitu's paper concerning the question whether ritual pyres were a major feature

of Minoan and Minoan-style peak sanctuaries. This offers some very valuable analysis of the variations in the evidence from different peak sanctuaries, and makes clear that, while evidence for pyres is found at relatively many, it varies in frequency and cannot be associated with any notion that offerings or the remains of (ritual) meals were thrown into them, as has been postulated in the past. The notion that peak sanctuaries represent a single homogeneous cult, already undermined by closer study of the evidence at individual sites, is further discredited.

A whole group of papers is concerned with material of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods. In many ways the most remarkable paper concerning Neolithic material is that by Stella Katsarou and Andreas Darlas, which gives a detailed analysis of two pairs of inhumation burials in caves Skoini 3 and 4 on the west coast of the Mani peninsula of Laconia, made in pits, both likely to be male-female and buried on a single occasion. Skoini 3 contained the remains of a remarkable pithos and much very fragmentary pottery, while in Skoini 4 the burial pit was sunk into a habitation layer; in both cases the pottery suggests a date of Final Neolithic. Given that burials of any date in the Neolithic period are rare, these fully deserve the attention they are given. Other papers are concerned with sequences and transitions. The transition from Middle to Late Neolithic in the Peloponnese generally is considered by Chris Mee's colleagues in the excavations at Kouphovouno, William Cavanagh and Josette Renard, from the standpoint of that excavation. A short paper by Lisa French puts the evidence for the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age period at Mycenae and in the wider Argolid into perspective, while a study by Eva Alram-Stern and others (including the much-missed Katie Demakopoulou) covers the pottery of the Final Neolithic and EH I periods at Midea, and Margarita Nazou discusses the material from Attica, covering the whole sequence from Final Neolithic to the end of EH and making a good case for the province's distinctness and internal variation and citing evidence for its external links. Joost Crouwel gives a useful account of the sequence at the remarkable site of Geraki in Laconia from Final Neolithic to the end of EH II, after which for a long time the site was abandoned; the site is notable for its formidable fortifications, long thought Mycenaean but now shown to be originally Final Neolithic and several times rebuilt in EH I-II, and also for the discovery of a large number of sealings of the same type as those found at Lerna in the "House of the Tiles".

Parallels and contrasts in the well-represented Early and Middle Helladic sequences of Kolonna on

Aigina and Korakou in the Corinthia are covered by Walter Gauss; much Aiginetan pottery was found at Korakou, but it remained a village throughout the Middle Helladic period, while Aigina was a fortified town with major connections in the Aegean. The developments in coarse ware, mainly cooking pottery, throughout the history of Phylakopi on Melos from Early to Late Bronze Age are set out by David Michael Smith, showing the adoption of specialised types of Minoan and later Mycenaean (including specifically Aiginetan) origin; he also discusses the evidence for the range of animal foods, including shellfish (especially limpets). A suggestion by the Kouphovouno team in publishing Early Bronze Age carbon-14 dates that the Middle Cycladic period in the Cyclades may have begun before Middle Helladic on the mainland, which is relevant to the sequence at Phylakopi, is rejected in a note by Robin Barber.

Two papers add to our knowledge of Mycenaean Laconia, but only one is concerned with the most flourishing period of Mycenaean development in the LH IIIA2-IIIB phases. One is of considerable importance, however, being concerned with the recently discovered palatial centre at Ayios Vasileios in Laconia, and by a major group of the experts who have excavated and studied the material (Eleftheria Kardamaki, Vasco Hachtmann, Adamantia Vasilogamvrou, Nektarios Karadimas and Sofia Voutsaki). Distinctive features of the local versions of the LH IIIA2, IIIB and early IIIC stylistic phases, as compared with the Argolid sequence, are set out and compared with the contemporary material from other Laconian sites, the Menelaion and Ayios Stephanos, and it is clearly stated that the major fire destruction that preserved an archive of Linear B tablets can be placed around the middle of LH IIIB (later than the original estimates), and that there was partial reconstruction and occupation into early LH IIIC, but no evidence for anything later. The other study (by Chrysanthi Gallou, Jon Henderson, Elias Spondylis and William Cavanagh), emphasising themes of localism and interconnectivity, concerns the considerable evidence for continuing settlement in the LH IIIC period at a variety of Laconian sites, including, somewhat surprisingly, the well-known underwater site of Pavlopetri, which has produced examples of the latest types. The evidence is strongest in southern coastal sites, but the reviewer feels uneasy about the unqualified statement that this reflected an "influx of refugees" from central Laconia (p. 69), although this is qualified in a footnote; this is making a large assumption about what was happening in Laconia at the time. The continuing existence of a fairly significant settlement in the central Eurotas valley is surely

guaranteed by the sequence of LH IIIC votives at the Amyklaion ritual site, and the discovery of Ayios Vasileios offers a salutary warning about how much might be concealed.

A sequence of pottery that must cover much of the LH IIIC period, from a settlement that was founded in one part of the later site of the city of Aigeira in Achaia, is given a masterly analysis by Jeremy Rutter. Five successive phases of occupation can be identified in the deposits, and though the pottery is badly preserved and very fragmentary, it is full of interest, offering a valuable picture of development through this period of decline. The settlement must have been of much less significance than Mycenae, Tiryns or Lefkandi, but maintained contacts with other regions, though these dwindle as the site, which was fortified at some stage (an indication of instability), evidently became smaller and poorer, to be eventually abandoned. The range of pottery is so heterogeneous in the techniques used (the wheel, coiling and combinations of these) and the quality of the paste from which the pottery was made that it seems to Rutter that pottery-making has become a household craft, practised by people with different traditions. Some pottery is imported (including a good quality handmade ware in the early phases), and influences are felt from elsewhere, showing up especially in the decorated pottery, but this becomes increasingly rare as simple bands and coats of paint become more common, a feature typical in the following Early Iron Age. An interesting feature is the decoration of large household pithoi with patterns in clay relief, perhaps reflecting their symbolic importance in the households' economies.

The last contribution to be considered, by Angelos Papadopoulos, is the only one to deal with material from outside the Aegean. It concerns the Mycenaean pottery recovered from the 1895 excavations conducted for the British Museum at Kourion in Cyprus, which was split between the British Museum, which took the bulk of the good material, and the Cyprus Museum. It provides a rather distressing reminder not only of the tendency towards "colonialist" behaviour by British and other "Western" excavation teams and individual investigators in Cyprus, but of the careless manner in which finds from excavations were all too often handled and recorded, and of the extraordinary lack of interest shown in recording details of the arrangements in graves (of which there were many), which were basically treated simply as sources for fine quality objects. (It must be said, Tsountas in his excavations in the chamber tomb cemeteries of Mycenae between 1887 and 1898 displayed a comparable lack of interest in recording the finds,

and preserved very little of the pottery). Overall, a bit more light is shed on the Late Bronze Age at Kourion in the paper, and it is to be hoped that the long term project of which the paper is a part will remedy the lack of publication of much of the material from old excavations that is alluded to (p. 175).

In general, then, this is a very varied collection of papers covering interesting material and offering valuable insights on many topics.

OLIVER DICKINSON
DURHAM UNIVERSITY, UK
otpkdickinson@googlemail.com

Susan E. Poole. *A Consideration of Gender Roles and Relations in the Aegean Bronze Age Interpreted from Gestures and Proxemics in Art* (UCL Institute of Archaeology PhD Series, vol. 3; BAR International Series S2980). pp. 184, figs 264 (many colour), tables 4; 3 appendices, additional tables and illustrations of Part II available for download from barpublishing.com/additional-downloads.html. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2020. ISBN 978-1-4073-5428-6, paperback; 978-1-4073-5429-3, e-format £47.

This is a difficult book to review, partly because of the sheer mass of material covered. Besides the figures in the text, there are many more in the Part II downloadable from BAR (this contains 3 appendices listing figures from frescoes (905), from glyptic material (157), and three-dimensional items (31) that were considered, all given some description, also 17 tables). Surprisingly, only a few figurines out of the many from Aegean contexts receive much attention. The explanation may be found in the word “proxemics” in the title (a new word, to the reviewer), which means spatial interaction between individuals; but interesting evidence is offered by some classes of figurine for the interpretation of gestures and poses, and this does receive some attention. The difficulties of coping with this mass of material and the discussion of it are compounded by the lack of an index, typical of BAR but making consultation and checking of references to a wide range of instances and to complex theoretical approaches a lengthy and often frustrating business.

The author concentrates on topics of gender interaction and gender roles, and after her introduction, discussions of relevant previous research and of a theoretical framework for analysis, and setting out the methodology and an overview of the material examined, her chapters have significant titles: Are There Gender-Distinct Activities, The Way Bodies Occupy Their Surrounding Space, In What Ways Do Figures Orientate Towards Each Other, Can The Seating Of Figures Reveal Anything about Gender Status, and What Might an Examination of Processions Reveal. In her theoretical framework and methodology she calls on a great deal of modern art theory and interpretation, which the reviewer does not feel qualified to discuss, let alone dispute (although he does feel that the supposedly ‘subordinate’ gesture of the second woman in 7.29 is more likely to display surprise or alarm, in the setting). Also, there is no space for examination of the mass of interpretations proposed for particular examples or groups of material, and he must leave it to other experts in particular fields to comment and maybe criticise the analysis and interpretations.

But the reviewer does feel competent to comment on the author’s account and use of archaeological evidence, which seems rather patchy, depending more on knowledge of the arguments about some particular interpretation or class of material than a full appreciation of the context in which the material is found. He finds it striking that, while reasonably dismissing the ideas derived from Evans’s theories that Minoan society was matriarchal and almost monotheistic in its devotion to a ‘Mother Goddess’, she questions the whole notion of a Minoan Goddess (p. 25). In the context, this seems likely to refer to the notion of an all-powerful goddess and to respond adversely to commonly occurring comments interpreting some particular representation as showing “the goddess”, as if there was only one; maybe she would accept a situation in which a goddess was the leader of a mixed pantheon that would include other goddesses (cf. Goodison and Morris 1998, ch. 6, a source that she does not cite), and in whose worship elite females could well have taken the lead. But she does not offer a detailed picture of how she imagines Minoan society and religion to have been organised, although her general comment on the way that high quality art of the Minoan kind could be used to establish the ideologies of ‘a dominant group of people’ (p. 2) gives the impression that she felt the religion was manipulated, and her general viewpoint seems to be that men would have been dominant in, if not constituted, this group.

However, she offers no detailed account of how the art that she is discussing was actually