

Yoldia regression around 9600 cal. BC and illustrates how it was subsequently located on a small river connecting a lake in the hinterland to the sea, until it was partially flooded by the Littorina transgression around 4000 cal BC.

From a traditional typological point of view, the dates given for the samples are somewhat confusing. The suggested Ahrensburgian 'context 1' looks very much like Early Maglemosian material, with the exception of a transverse arrowhead with micro-damage, which looks to me like typical damage from use as a projectile head (p. 55). In the text this is interpreted as an Ahrensburgian microlith (Zonhoven point or trapeze). The finding of a convincing classical Late Palaeolithic 'Federmesser' (p. 70), 50m NE of context 1, does not provide a pre-Mesolithic date for the context itself. The distribution patterns for lithic waste and microliths look, furthermore, suspiciously like what one would expect to find in a standard Maglemosian 'Ulkestrup II' dwelling unit; it consists of one concentration of microliths, with the main concentration of burnt flint lying 2m to the E-NE of this, and both located within a main concentration of lithic waste 4-5m in diameter. In addition to examples in Scandinavia, Northern Germany and England, this type has now also been observed in Early Mesolithic contexts in Southern Germany and Belgium.

The remaining finds presented also appear very Maglemosian, with the most convincing Late Mesolithic indicator being the transverse arrowhead (regarded as an Ahrensburgian microlith). One is left with the feeling that there are problems with some of the radiocarbon dates, possibly due to bioturbation.

A number of questions remain unanswered: amongst them, why should the concentration of burnt Maglemosian flint in 'context 8' represent a ritual feature and not be the result of a burnt-down log-cabin as in the Finish burnt-down pit dwellings with parts of the burnt timber preserved? This could probably produce temperatures high enough to burn the flint. Why are the dwelling reconstructions covered with hides? Where much better and lighter birch bark is available, the use of hides for tent coverings generally seems to be restricted to winter conditions where their insulating qualities are important. Why should the pole in context 7 be a totem pole? And so on.

The book makes a convincing case that the Årup site contained the remains of several Mesolithic dwellings, mainly from the Maglemosian period. A more consistent analysis and documentation of the relevant features would, however, have made the individual interpretations more convincing to the professional reader. The well-illustrated inserted sections with background information of varying relevance to the Årup site, as well as the title and design of the book, make one wonder whether the publication's target audience is the archaeological research community or the interested lay-public. The book is an attractive attempt at engaging the latter, but this reviewer has some doubts about whether it will persuade the former. *In the Wake of a Woman* may usefully be read in tandem with a Finnish collection edited by Helena Ranta (2002: *Huts and houses, Stone Age and Early Metal Age buildings in Finland*. Helsinki: National Board of Antiquities) which contains much pertinent material, including observations on the remains of burnt Late Mesolithic/Neolithic log-cabins.

Tombs for the living

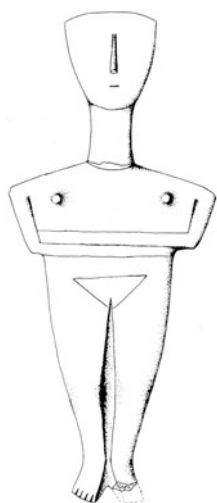
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STYLIANOS ALEXIOU & PETER WARREN. *The Early Minoan Tombs of Lebena, Southern Crete (Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology 30)*. 223 pages, 53 figures, 164 plates, 1 chart inset in back cover. 2004. Sävedalen: Paul Åström; 91-7081-126-1 paperback \$187.

YIANNIS PAPADATOS with SEVI TRIANTAPHYLLOU. *Tholos Tomb Gamma: A Prepalatial Tholos Tomb at Phourni, Archanes* (Institute of Aegean Prehistory Monograph 17). xviii+158 pages, 29 figures, 22 plates, 19 tables. 2005. Philadelphia (PA): INSTAP Academic Press; 1-931534-17-9 hardback £35.

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The Bronze Age societies of Crete, commonly known as ‘Minoan’ (a problematic term that has, in the last few years and at long last, come under increasing



criticism: cf. Hamilakis 2002; Karadimas & Momigliano 2004; Whitley 2006), have been constructed as the first European civilisation by an Europeanist and Orientalist discourse, based mostly on archaeological mythologies; these mythologies command enormous popular appeal and confer substantial tourist value. It is only very recently that we have started peeling away these layers of archaeological mythologising (an interesting and politically revealing phenomenon in

its own right) to gain some understanding of the complexities of social life in Crete in the third and second millennia BC. Paradoxically, it is the longest phase of that cultural phenomenon, the Early Bronze Age (the third millennium) that we know least: archaeological research has largely focused on the impressive structures that archaeologists used to (and some still do) call ‘palaces’, and their surrounding sites, a phenomenon mostly of the Middle and Late Bronze Age; besides, in the many long-lived sites, later structures obscured the earlier phases. Moreover, within the until recently dominant neo-evolutionist interpretative framework, it was the later phases, the times of ‘maturity’, ‘stately’ power, and ‘civilisation’ that served as the starting point for research; earlier phases thus acquired value as the precursor of these ‘mature’ phases, not in their own right, hence the quest for evolutionist origins, ‘proto-palaces’ and the like.

As a result, the Early Bronze Age of Crete is largely known from its burial record, an arena which was fundamental in the production and reproduction of social life; while the material manifestations of this arena varied regionally and chronologically, its most extensively known and studied forms were the impressive, above-ground, vaulted and stone-built, communal tombs (*tholoi*), used for many hundreds of years and found primarily in south-central Crete, with only a few examples in other parts of the island.

These were places for the living, as well as for the dead: the loci of social gatherings in funerals and other mortuary ceremonies, the repositories of a vast range and a huge quantity of material culture, from pottery to stone vessels, seals, weapons, figurines, and more besides, the arenas of eating and drinking events, even dancing, as one of their best-known investigators, Keith Branigan (1993) has suggested. As such, they must have been the loci for intense social interactions, for power displays and contestations, for negotiating identities and roles, for producing, managing and reproducing remembering and forgetting (cf. Hamilakis 1998). Alas, most of them were looted in modern times, and almost none of the unlooted ones were fully published until recently. The two volumes under review, therefore, represent a major advance in the study of these contexts and of the Early Bronze Age of Crete: two final reports, one for a group of five tombs (and adjacent buildings) in three different localities in the area of Lebena in south-central Crete, and the other for Tomb Gamma, part of the important cemetery at Phourni, Archanes (cf. also Panagiotopoulos 2002; Maggidis 1998) in north-central Crete, all largely unlooted in modern times.

Lebena

The tombs at Lebena were excavated by Stylianos Alexiou in the 1950s, a pioneer of the heroic phase of Cretan archaeology, at a time when he was one of only two state archaeologists in Crete. The careful excavation, the detailed records, and the generosity of this great scholar (who has, in more recent years, pursued a second equally successful career as specialist in Byzantine and Modern Greek literature), allowed the final publication of this material. Alexiou contributed a short account of the excavation (previously published in short preliminary reports) to the present volume, but the detailed presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the material is the work of Peter Warren, whose admirable persistence and long-term commitment to this material enabled this publication to happen. The volume is a complex excavation report, presenting the structural properties, associated burial practices, chronology and finds (excluding the skeletal material, still under study) from each group of tombs in the three localities (Papoura, Gerokampos and Zervou). The volume ends with a short overall conclusion and an extensive illustration component, with overall high quality line drawings and black and white photographs.

The burial group of Lebena will be of immense importance to scholars interested in the chronological development of pottery styles, as it spans from the very beginning of the Bronze Age (or 'Early Minoan I'; tomb II at Gerokampos) to the 'Middle Minoan IB' (tomb III at Zervou), that is to the start of the phase conventionally known as 'palatial' (although whether their use was continuous is not entirely certain). Indeed, chronology and stylistic development are the topics emphasised by Warren in this publication (cf. also Todaro 2005). Scholars who are interested in aspects such as the burial practices and their meaning may be disappointed, for the discussion on these issues is minimal, and does not take into account the several recent developments in the field, either in the Aegean, or more broadly. Most readers will also find the volume difficult to use, as quantitative data are rarely presented in tabular form, and the book layout does a disservice to such a complex and important material. Furthermore, Warren inscribes this material onto an interpretative framework which sees almost all the finds as burial goods, items used in life and deposited as personal possessions of the dead, or especially made for the burial but seen as of 'use or desirability to the dead'. In general, all objects, according to Warren, '*belonged to the world of the dead*' and they '*surely demonstrate a belief in an afterlife*' (p. 191). But substantiation for such a categorical statement is not provided. Most finds, certainly of pottery, are very distinctive in terms of function: they were used for eating (also demonstrated by the animal bone assemblages in Lebena and many other tombs) and mostly drinking by the living people, most likely in a mortuary feasting-drinking context. Yet, for Warren the living participants in these funerary ceremonies wouldn't touch the stuff; he dismisses out of hand such practices, talking instead of libations, or slightly more generously, toasting to the dead. A mortuary feasting-drinking explanation, however, is the most likely scenario, as shown in two other cemeteries where detailed pottery studies have been carried out: Agia Kyriaki (Blackman & Branigan 1982; see also Hamilakis 1998) and Moni Odigitrias (Michelaki *et al* 2006).

Lebena, as all other communal tholos tombs of Crete, shows an at least two-stage process of primary and secondary treatment of the dead: originally deposited and displayed as individual bodies, after a certain time the corpse was disturbed and the bones deposited into anonymous piles. Objects and artefacts were equally reshuffled and moved around, inhibiting any reliable

inferences on the social status of individuals. Warren, however, believes in the possibility of some special 'founder burials', based on the proximity of corpses to distinctive objects such as marble figurines, invoking thus a direct correspondence between precious/exotic objects and status. He also sees these tombs as serving the needs of relatively egalitarian groups, a clan or extended family. Nevertheless, on this and on other issues to do with social structure and demography, despite earlier hopes that Lebena may prove crucial, not much can be said, at least not until the outcome of the physical anthropological study.

Phourni, Archanes

Tomb Gamma from Phourni is a slightly different case: one of only a handful of Early Bronze Age tholos tombs from outside southern Crete, and part of a cemetery used for almost 14 centuries (excavated by the Sakellarakis from 1964 to 1989), it shares with southern tholoi many features such as the communal nature, the architectural form including the corbelled roof, the type of objects found, the division between primary, secondary or tertiary burial and interference, the presence of animal bones and shells; but unlike most other tholoi sites, the quantity of pottery found here is small, mostly fragmented and non-diagnostic, thus inhibiting a thorough analysis of commensal and other mortuary practices. The published report is thorough, detailed and clear with excellent illustrations, but its interpretative content is minimal. Paradoxically, the volume is a dryer, cut-down version of the doctoral thesis upon which it is based (Papadatos 1999) where richer interpretative insights are to be found. This report, however, contains, in an appendix by Triantaphyllou, the first detailed analysis of human remains from a Cretan Early Bronze Age tholos tomb: despite the small sample size (30 being the minimum number of individuals), this is an extremely valuable study.

This tomb, which was used from 'Early Minoan IIA' to 'Middle Minoan IA', shows, according to Papadatos, that skulls were treated specially (during secondary burial): they were assembled into smaller groups, rather than thrown into anonymous piles. But the most interesting feature is the introduction, during the later phase of the use of the tomb, of *larnakes*, clay coffins, used for both primary and secondary burials. Both features, as well as the many other traits found in most tombs, such as the interference with and circulation of bones and objects, the eating and

drinking rituals, the periodic ‘cleanings’, destruction and concealment of bones, objects and burial horizons (such as the burning and the subsequent covering of the burial layer with sand in Lebena tomb IIa, p. 18), offer ample scope for reconstructing these mnemoscapes; for discussing the collective rituals of remembering and forgetting, the tension between the two, and their power connotations; for elucidating the role of eating and drinking as mnemonic devices; for understanding the creation of mnemonic maps through the division and demarcation of space (by using the clay coffins, for example, or antechambers used simultaneously with the tholoi). These two volumes contain invaluable datasets on Bronze Age Crete. But sadly, discussion on issues such as the above will have to wait for other, future publications.

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Nasca and Moche iconography

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DONALD A. PROULX. *A Sourcebook of Nasca Ceramic Iconography: Reading a Culture through its Art*. xiv+236 pages, 335 figures, 40 colour plates. 2006. Iowa City (IA); University of Iowa Press; 978-0-87745-979-8 hardback \$59.95.

STEVE BOURGET. *Sex, Death, and Sacrifice in Moche Religion and Visual Culture*. xiv+258 pages, 260 illustrations, 25 colour plates, 4 tables. 2006. Austin

(TX): University of Texas Press; 978-0-292-71279-9 hardback £38.

In these two books Donald Proulx and Steve Bourget tackle the thorny issue of iconographic interpretation of the pre-literate Early Intermediate Period (AD 100-700) coastal cultures of Nasca and Moche in the Andes. What is presented here is a rich and varied ensemble of often

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