

(e.g. Forenbaer & Miracle, Chapter 14), their only effective explanation is based on immigrant colonists, with indigenous foragers in marginal areas accepting the Neolithic way of life in a piecemeal fashion.

I have doubts, however. The Neolithic archaeological record in the western Mediterranean should fit those preconceptions if it were a mirror of life and the adoption of new material culture and practices were to be quickly reflected in it. But we can also hypothesise that these elements were structurally scarce with the effect of “their virtual invisibility in the archaeological record” (Cruz Berrocal 2012: 145). While relatively sudden changes in the Levant tend to be interpreted as a feature of the archaeological record—for example, Goring-Morris and Belfer-Cohen (Chapter 4, pp. 67–68) argue that the sudden appearance of pottery make it “likely that ceramics represent an addition to and replacement of [...] basketry”—in the western Mediterranean everything pertaining to the Neolithic is currently interpreted as the result of the actions of maritime colonists. But the ‘strangeness’ of these maritime pioneers is made clear in the chapters: their place of origin is impossible to determine (e.g. for the Cardial ‘peoples’ in the Iberian Peninsula, Perrin & Binder, Chapter 16). These colonists also had no preference for any environmental setting, although they liked to inhabit caves; they colonised coastal areas gradually but moved suddenly inland, deep into the interiors of Corsica, Sardinia and the Iberian Peninsula, for example. Indeed, they skipped available areas like Catalonia only to settle in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, or even on the Atlantic coast; they arrived in new lands and started to produce new styles of pottery (e.g. Adriatic Impressed Ware) or to create rock art following patterns that show both extensive and intensive knowledge of the seasonal resources and territory of the entire Mediterranean Iberian coast (Cruz Berrocal 2005). Upon their arrival in the Iberian Peninsula, they set up extensive networks of exchange, apparently reproducing Mesolithic networks (e.g. the blade and trapeze complex, Perrin & Binder, Chapter 16); and, finally, they continued to use elements of Mesolithic traditions (e.g. *Columbella rustica*; Grifoni Cremonesi & Radi, Chapter 15) and had virtually identical lithic industries to Mesolithic peoples (e.g. in northern Italy, Chapter 16), but no acknowledged interaction with them. To my mind, these are problematic aspects of the colonisation model that should not be downplayed in favour of what seems to me like an all-encompassing ethnographic analogy: pioneer colonisation. Having replaced the ‘wave of advance’ hypothesis and its explicatory mechanisms

by this formal analogy, we are now lacking a plausible explanatory model to understand why all those pioneers should (or did) set off to colonise vast areas of the Mediterranean. This book provides a starting point from which to problematise these questions.

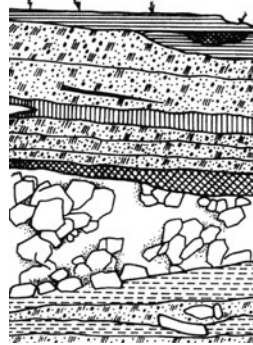
References

- CRUZ BERROCAL, M. 2005. *Paisaje y arte rupestre. Patrones de localización de la pintura levantina* (British Archaeological Reports international series 1409). Oxford: Archaeopress.
- 2012. The Early Neolithic in the Iberian Peninsula and the western Mediterranean: a review of the evidence on migration. *Journal of World Prehistory* 25: 123–56.

MARÍA CRUZ BERROCAL

Zukunftskolleg Universität Konstanz, Germany
(Email: maria.cruz-berrocal@uni-konstanz.de)

NIKOS EFSTRATIOU, ALEXANDRA KARETSOU & MARIA NTINOU (ed.). *The Neolithic settlement of Knossos in Crete: new evidence for the early occupation of Crete and the Aegean Islands* (Prehistory Monographs 42). xxiv+217 pages, 84 b&w illustrations and 1 colour illustration, 45 tables, 2013. Philadelphia (PA): INSTAP Academic; 978-1-931534-72-7 hardback £55.



This volume chronicles a rescue excavation undertaken in 1997 in the Central Court of the Minoan Palace at Knossos. Over just 5 weeks, a single 3 × 2m trench was dug down to bedrock at a depth of 8m (the trench was reduced to 1.5 × 1.5m below 4.5m depth). That such a significant and high-quality volume stems from such a small excavation bears testimony to the seriousness and commitment with which Nikos Efstratiou and his team approached this work and their realisation of its importance for our understanding of Neolithic Knossos and the Neolithic in the Aegean more widely.

Knossos is most famous as the site of the largest and most impressive of the Minoan palaces. Its Neolithic occupation, dating back to 7000 BC, is much less well known, not least because of the

difficulties in excavating the levels below the Bronze Age palace. The British School at Athens carried out excavations between 1956 and 1971 in the Great Court, under the direction of J.D. Evans, uncovering a long Neolithic sequence. This revealed Knossos to be not just the earliest Neolithic settlement on Crete but one of the earliest in south-eastern Europe. The 1997 excavation, though small in scale, offered the opportunity to apply a suite of modern techniques with a strong palaeoenvironmental emphasis.

The volume starts with a detailed description of the excavation by Efstratiou, Karetsou and Banou, covering the stratigraphy and architectural features. A complete Neolithic sequence was uncovered, consisting of 39 levels, extending from the Late Neolithic back to the Aceramic Neolithic. In Chapter 2, Efstratiou summarises the various finds and categories of archaeological evidence from each cultural phase. The subsequent chapters present all of these results in greater detail.

Dimitriadis demonstrates the diversity of ceramic fabrics and suggests the possible existence of non-Cretan ones; his work thus supports the growing appreciation of the complexity of production and exchange networks on Early Neolithic Crete. The sedimentological study, conducted by Fumana García and completed by Carmona González, indicates that the frequency of organic matter fluctuated significantly across the sequence, suggesting changes in the intensity of human occupation.

The archaeobotanical report by Sarpaki makes clear that the very first Neolithic inhabitants at Knossos were fully fledged farmers; the presence of naked wheat (*Triticum turgidum/aeestivum*) in the Aceramic levels suggests an Anatolian or Levantine origin for the earliest inhabitants. The absence of olives throughout the Neolithic sequence is noted both by Sarpaki and by Badal and Ntinou in their study of the wood charcoal assemblage. Placing these latter data in the context of the Cretan pollen evidence, it is possible to see fluctuations in the frequency of deciduous and evergreen tree species within an overall homogeneity, suggesting typically Mediterranean vegetation around Knossos and its exploitation for firewood. The phytolith assemblage indicates variation in the frequency of cereals and wild plants, which Madella argues could represent differences both in subsistence strategies and in the use of space.

Pérez Ripoll presents a detailed study of the faunal assemblage. Unfortunately, no animal bone was recovered from the Aceramic levels from the 1997

excavation, but the fauna from the Early Neolithic suggest that the full package of domestic animals had been introduced by that date; the age profiles for sheep, goat, cattle and pig all support a meat-focused exploitation strategy.

Horwitz places the faunal assemblage in the wider Near Eastern domestication context and discusses possible source regions. Her assessment of the main species indicates fully domesticated sheep alongside proto-domestic—and/or possibly wild—goat, pig and cattle; she argues for an Anatolian origin for the Knossos fauna. This is an engrossing study that should be widely read.

The chapter on radiocarbon dating by Facorellis and Maniatis combines dates from Evans' excavations with new samples from the 1997 work. A fascinating pattern emerges: the Aceramic Neolithic dates to c. 7000 cal BC, whereas the rest of the sequence (Early to Late Neolithic, 5m of deposit) yields dates that are almost contemporary (e.g. 5300–5000 cal BC, OxA-9216, depth 7.4m; and 5470–4850 cal BC, DEM-638, depth 2m). The authors explain this pattern through a change in the rate of sedimentary deposition and thus in the intensity of human occupation. A more critical assessment of these data would have been welcome. How can the chronological variability identified by all the contributors be reconciled with the short time span represented? And what does the overlap in the dates, if they are to be accepted, mean in terms of stratigraphic integrity? Efstratiou closes the volume with an overview of the beginnings of the Neolithic in Greece and the Aegean.

A few additions would have further strengthened this significant volume. It would have benefited from stronger contextualisation of the 1997 excavation in relation to Evans's work. Similarly, it could have made more use of the recent work; in 2013, when the volume appeared, Neolithic Knossos was much better known than in 1997, when the excavation took place, due to renewed studies on Evans's material undertaken in the intervening years (see Isaakidou & Tomkins 2008). Although referenced throughout, these studies could have been more fully integrated. The addition of the cultural data would also have made for a more balanced volume. Efstratiou notes that the ceramic study is still in progress and will appear in a separate volume. Given the 15 years separating the excavation and publication dates, however, one would have hoped that there had been time to rectify this omission.

© Antiquity Publications Ltd, 2015

These issues notwithstanding, this is a thorough and well-presented volume that demonstrates how a limited excavation—albeit of a very important site—can yield significant results. It makes an important contribution towards understanding the Neolithic settlement of Knossos specifically and the origins of the Neolithic in Greece and the Aegean islands more generally. Its strong palaeoenvironmental emphasis is a particularly useful addition to the limited—though increasing—corpus of such data from Crete and the wider region.

Reference

ISAAKIDOU, V. & P. TOMKINS (ed.). 2008. *Escaping the labyrinth: the Cretan Neolithic in context* (Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology 8). Oxford: Oxbow.

NELLIE PHOCA-COSMETATOU
McDonald Institute for Archaeological Studies,
University of Cambridge, UK
(Email: nehp100@cam.ac.uk)

ANDREA BRÄUNING & IMMA KILIAN-DIRLMEIER. *Die eisenzeitlichen Grabhügel von Vergina: Die Ausgrabungen von Photis Petsas 1960–1961* (Monographie 119). vi+328 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations, and tables. 2013. Mainz: Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums; 978-3-88467-223-5 hardback €68.



Vergina, the site of a major Early Iron Age tumulus cemetery that is the subject of this volume, occupies a contentious place in Balkan archaeological politics. Vergina, in present-day Greek Macedonia, is the site of ancient Aigai, the earliest capital of the Kingdom of Macedon. It is best known as the location of the 'tomb of Philipp II' (father of Alexander the Great) excavated by Manolis Andronikos in the 1970s. The 'star of Vergina', a decoration on a gold container found in this tomb, has now been appropriated (some might say purloined)

by the neighbouring state of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), to serve as its flag. Present-day Vergina therefore looks both north (to the Balkans) and south (to the Aegean).

Plus ça change! As this volume shows, Vergina's connections in the Early Iron Age (1000–600 BC) were much the same. The authors have been tasked with publishing the Iron Age burial tumuli excavated by Photis Petsas in the 1960s, and they provide a comprehensive illustrated catalogue of the 23 tumuli, 130 graves, associated finds and surviving drawings from the excavations (pp. 161–309). The authors are to be commended for gathering together this disparate collection of material, held in various different locations, and on integrating these finds with the results of Andronikos's and Romioupoulou's excavations. The end result is a comprehensive overview of the tumuli of Early Iron Age Vergina. Less useful, from the point of view of the reader, is their decision to retain Petsas's cumbersome numbering system, where artefacts are numbered by Arabic numerals, tumuli by Roman numerals, and graves within tumuli by combining Greek letters, sometimes extending beyond the number available in the Greek alphabet (hence, one grave in tumulus LXV is both alpha and omega).

The volume nonetheless proceeds with admirable German logic, with a *Vorwort* (pp. 1–3), brief discussions of the historical background (i.e. the relevant literary sources, pp. 5–6), the history of research (pp. 7–8) and the relation of Petsas' excavations of the Early Iron Age and (partly) Hellenistic cemetery to those of earlier investigations (pp. 9–11). Next, we have a thorough typological discussion of the finds (pp. 13–88), their associations as grave assemblages and their distributions. The spatial distributions of key artefact categories are plotted on maps, showing connections both to the north and south. For example, the distinctive hand-made, two-footed cooking vessel is found exclusively in Macedonia, while other objects have wider distributions: a distinctive variety of bronze spectacle fibulae (*Brillenfibeln mit mehrfach geführter Achterschleife*) is to be found in Austria, Slovenia, Greek Macedonia and the Peloponnese. The reason why so much space is devoted to bronze diadems and iron weapons only becomes clear in the next two chapters, on assemblages and grave types (pp. 89–103) and on the organisation of the cemetery (pp. 105–42).

Here we run into the principal problem with the excavation archive. While Petsas retained information