

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.

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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

on the artefacts, for the graves themselves and the individual tumuli, neither a section drawing of a single tumulus nor a complete plan of the excavations was to be found. Worse still, neither the skeletons from the inhumation trenches nor the (rarer and later) human cremated remains were retained. So, with the minor exception of some of the graves excavated by Romiopoulou, there has been no osteological study of the human remains.

The authors are clearly interested both in social organisation and gender. They try, through a careful assessment of comparable examples across the region, to use various artefact combinations and grave sizes (in the case of the inhumations and *pitbos* burials) to sort the graves into those of adult males, adult females and children. Men have either spears or swords (rarely do they have both), while women have distinctive diadem-like head-dresses. A detailed examination of two of the larger tumuli (N and T) from Andronikos's excavations allows the authors to put forward two possible social models: that the graves grouped together under this tumulus represent a polygynous, patriarchal kin group (as is found in later times in Macedonia); or, that some kind of *Männerbund* might have been in operation. Neither model is pushed very far, because the pattern discerned in these two tumulus groups does not seem to hold for some of the other, larger tumuli with multiple graves (such as the 59 from tumulus LXV). These chapters are followed by a discussion of where the associated settlement might have been (as there are no *toumbas*—tell settlements—nearby, pp. 143–45), some concluding remarks (pp. 147–52) and a Greek summary (pp. 153–59).

One difficulty this reader encountered in following the overall argument is the authors' reliance on Klaus Kilian's Early Iron Age chronology for Macedonia, divided into Stufe II, III and IV and lasting from just after 1000 BC down into the seventh century. But this chronology is never explicitly laid out in an earlier chapter—the reader has to tease this information out from between the lines. To be sure, this volume is written in clear German that is relatively easy for those (such as this reviewer) with a light grasp of the language to follow—it is nothing (thankfully) like Karl Kübler's *Kerameikos* reports. And it presents an interesting argument about Macedonian Early Iron Age society, which (if true) implies a social order in northern Greece quite unlike those to be found in the Aegean communities farther south. It thus makes a distinctive contribution to the debate on how and

why various Mediterranean communities developed as they did before 600 BC, and how and why some became citizen-states while others did not. It is to be warmly recommended to Early Iron Age scholars, whether working on the Aegean or farther north.

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MARTÍN ALMAGRO-GORBEA (ed.). *Iberia. Protohistory of the far west of Europe: from Neolithic to Roman conquest*. 361 pages, 211 colour and b&w illustrations. 2014. Burgos: Universidad de Burgos & Fundación Atapuerca. 978-84-92681-91-4 paperback €35.



Europe, as Cunliffe (2008) has observed, is a peninsula or subcontinent of the larger Eurasian landmass, and the Iberian Peninsula constitutes its 'far west'. This latter region has not figured prominently in general syntheses of later European prehistory, and this is particularly unfortunate as it represents a privileged vantage point from which to explore cultural interactions at the crossroads of Mediterranean, continental and Atlantic influences. Although there have been some remarkable recent overviews of specific periods or aspects of late prehistoric and protohistoric Iberia (e.g. Gracia Alonso 2008; Berrocal *et al.* 2013), the volume under review constitutes the first general synthesis in English (simultaneously published in Spanish) to cover the whole timespan from the earliest Neolithic to the Roman conquest. It was launched on the occasion of the XVII World Congress of the UISPP (*Union Internationale des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques*), held at Burgos from 1–7 September 2014, under the patronage of the Fundación Atapuerca, the organisation concerned with research at the well-known nearby Palaeolithic site of Atapuerca. The general editor of the volume, Martín Almagro-Gorbea, has been one of the leading scholars of Iberian prehistory in recent decades, with a particular focus on Late Bronze and Iron Age communities.

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