

S.W. identifies that the study is impeded by the paucity in skeletal assemblages from the time frame and geographical region selected, and the likelihood that the marginalised were absent from Greek cemeteries (p. 221). S.W. elected to focus on datasets from mainland Greece dating from the sixth to fifth/fourth centuries BCE, eliciting a study sample comprising 22 sites, most of which were cemeteries (p. 4). The rationale for this selection is sound, S.W. arguing that the inclusion of bioarchaeological data from the further reaches of the Greek world presents challenges for comparison (p. 4). S.W.'s data was obtained through the datamining of published skeletal reports, which means the study is at the mercy of the publication quality and inter-observer differences. S.W. decided not to include age and gender as discrete categories of analysis, despite their visibility within the skeletal record, because they are subordinating rather than marginalising attributes (p. 8). S.W. argued that, although women, elderly and child populations experienced discrimination, they still served as active agents in vital societal roles and so were not marginalised (p. 9). Yet, the consequences of subordination, as S.W. describes it, have striking overlap with those of social marginalisation, impacting diets and dental health for example (p. 8). Perhaps subordination and marginalisation fall on a spectrum of similar processes. Some flexibility on either the geographical range, chronological scopes or the definition of marginalisation may have helped address a frustratingly small sample size.

S.W.'s interdisciplinary study is innovative, the first bioarchaeological study of social marginalisation in the ancient Greek world. S.W. demonstrates an expert knowledge of bioarchaeology and conveys this well to a non-osteology specialist audience, presenting a useful synthesis for the state of play more broadly of the bioarchaeology of ancient Greece. This volume is a sound starting point for researchers to build from, as S.W. highlights areas for future research.

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE AEGEAN BRONZE AGE

POURSAT (J. - C.) *The Art and Archaeology of the Aegean Bronze Age. A History*. Translated by Carl Knappett. Pp. xxii + 556, b/w & colour
 ills, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Cased, £195,
 US\$255. ISBN: 978-1-108-47134-3.

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This book, by one of the Aegean Bronze Age's foremost archaeologists, is an impressively heavy volume – certainly not a textbook to carry around. This weight is because it 'combines in a single volume the eight parts originally published in two separate monographs' (p. 8). That it is a collection of sorts is disguised well; it flows with a consistent structure that follows the traditional geographical and chronological divisions. P. is particularly well known for his fieldwork at the Minoan site of Malia on Crete. Originally in French, this volume has been translated by another of Aegean archaeology's foremost practitioners, C. Knappett, who takes joint credit on the front cover. The English translation is extremely good, the points are clear, and only a limited amount of jargon is used, resulting in an accessible overview of this large, complex discipline.

The traditional structure starts with the Neolithic period and moves through time (Early, Middle, Late and end of the Late Bronze Ages), while paying attention to three distinct regions (Crete, the Greek mainland and the Cyclades) and the palatial cultures of the Minoans and the Mycenaeans. There is a clear focus on artworks by material, with additional chapters on historical frameworks and architecture for each period.

It works very well as a textbook (as it announces itself to be in its first sentence, p. 1), but it is not priced as one (£195 hardback). Receiving this book for a review was a definite prize – but textbooks are for students, and clearly this is out of budget for them. The structure (56 chapters for the hard copy) is given even more detail in the e-book table of contents, for example, with Chapter 1 ‘Introduction’ subdivided into: ‘The Geographical and Historical Framework’; ‘The Discovery of Aegean Civilisations’; ‘The History of Aegean Art’ and ‘Organisation of the Volume’ (pp. 1–8). This is particularly useful in a textbook, where you might want to check a topic quickly, rather than read from cover to cover.

Available textbooks on the Aegean Bronze Age are usually collections of chapters from different specialists. Perhaps more could be said in the introduction to explain how this work is distinctive from others. Some previous works on the ‘History of Aegean Art’ are mentioned on pp. 5–7, but this book covers archaeological themes as well as art. This overview is not comprehensive – O. Dickinson’s *The Aegean Bronze Age* (1994) is a rare example of a single scholar attempting a monograph overview, although Dickinson chose a more thematic approach, for example covering burial customs for the entire field in a chapter. T. Cullen’s *Aegean Prehistory: a Review*, containing major articles originally published in the *American Journal of Archaeology* (2001), is another example of a well-used introduction not mentioned here (but in the bibliography).

The tone throughout the book is balanced and measured, as befits a textbook. For example, P.’s account of Neopalatial ‘Pillar Rooms’ (pp. 157–8) focuses on their physical characteristics and their function as storage areas. He also refers to the traditional belief that they were ritual spaces, which gives fair recognition to the historiography as well as the archaeology. This commitment to balance can, at times, lead to a more descriptive feel, rather than the analytical approach preferred by some. It can also lead to a de-populated impression of the material remains – who might have entered and used these spaces? Another example is the section on ‘Iconographic programmes and interpretations’ (pp. 191–4), which contains sound information on the ‘iconographic programmes’, their ‘earliest interpretations’, ‘religion and society’, ‘nature and symbolism’ and ‘frescoes and their functions’. These traditional themes are well selected, with clear outlines of the current state of play. Perhaps more could be made of recent approaches that explore how these wall paintings were experienced – and how they impacted on people (notably C. Palyvou’s work). The chosen topics are certainly valid, but also cautious, and there is room to explore the more adventurous approaches becoming more commonplace in Aegean archaeology.

The book seeks to provide understanding about what evidence there is. For example, P. gives very useful summaries of materials and craft methods – such as the nature of the faience that the Snake Goddesses are made of (p. 232). He also notes that they have restored elements (pp. 217–18) – indeed, they were very fragmentary when discovered. There are, in the field, disputes about physical reconstructions (particularly regarding wall paintings) and intense debates about interpretative reconstructions. One of the fiercest concerns the chronological framework, centred on the date of the Theran eruption. Characterised as ‘disagreements’, P. diplomatically outlines the two key positions and suggests a working solution (p. 136).

Although the presentation of the evidence as known is very clear, lack of space does not always allow for the full implications to be unpacked. For example, the fortification walls around Mycenae originally enclosed just the summit of the acropolis (around 1340 BCE),

but were extended later to include Grave Circle A and the construction of the Lion Gate (after 1250 BCE). Why the elite should have chosen to include the ‘dead’ space of Grave Circle A is a fascinating question. Is this some kind of ancestral veneration? Did this legitimise the socio-political status of the palatial elite? Or were there practical reasons for enclosing this space? It is understandable that detailed analysis must be limited in a book that is already large, but such questions help bring this empirical evidence to life.

There is little missing in the coverage – perhaps more could be said about the Linear A and Linear B tablets, but this is not a book on texts. The book reflects the limited engagement in the discipline regarding the legacy of these civilisations – how they influenced not only later Greeks, but also us. The reception studies we see in classical archaeology have been slower to take off for earlier millennia, with the notable exception of scholars such as N. Momigliano. The only treatment of this approach P. gives is in the final chapter – on the somewhat negative theme of ‘fakes’. That the Aegean Bronze Ages influenced later generations is one reason for studying them.

This book has a good number of illustrations (if ‘not exhaustive’ – p. 8), mostly black and white. The bibliography (references, or ‘works cited’, at the back) is more selective than one might expect for such a wide-ranging and detailed textbook – even the translator, Knappett, appears rarely as a co-author. P. states that ‘in some cases only the most recent studies are cited’ (p. 8), but a skim-read gives an impression of outdated references. However, the ‘further reading’ sections at the end of each chapter are different again, often more recent, and some works are cited in the text that are not in either list. As a random example, ‘C.M. Hale, *Hesperia* 85, 2016, 243–95’ is cited on p. 126, but not listed in the relevant page of the references (p. 537), nor the further reading for that section (p. 128). Harvard-style citations in the text seem to refer to the end bibliography (pp. 531–46). This is confusing – but the book does seem to be more up to date than the end bibliography initially suggests.

Overall, this is a very enjoyable read through the highlights of the Aegean Bronze Age: detailed, clear, measured and comprehensive. This is a welcome contribution, if set at a steep price.

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TEXTILES AND MINOANISATION

†CUTLER (J.E.) *Crafting Minoanisation. Textiles, Crafts Production and Social Dynamics in the Bronze Age Southern Aegean.* (Ancient Textiles 33.) Pp. xxvi + 284, figs, b/w & colour ills, b/w & colour maps. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2021. Cased, £48. ISBN: 978-1-78570-966-1.

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This publication is an in-depth examination of the process of ‘Minoanisation’ – the adoption of Bronze Age Cretan culture in the southern Aegean islands and on the Greek mainland – using textile technology as a case study. It foregrounds an agent-centred approach in order to understand the potential reasons for Minoanisation, which highlights the participation of women and sheds light on the previously understudied phenomenon of female mobility within the Middle and Late Bronze Age Aegean. The book primarily