

duct. Her ideas extend to suggestions for future approaches to studying color. She encourages multidisciplinary dialogue for future research that should concentrate on what can be known, and not search for “meaning” in things that are not meaningful, but that are, rather, purely aesthetic. She ends with the reminder that it is important not to leave out agency in any of our studies of color: “Just as I believe that it is vital to remember the agency of those who, in the past, created the colours we now study, so I believe it is important for us to remember ourselves as agents in that study and to be constructively critical of our own agency in creating approaches to the subject” (144). I quite agree.

All in all, *Colour in the Ancient Mediterranean World* is not only a collection of studies of color but also a lesson in the growing and important quest to consider ancient people and their material culture in the correct light.

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IL VILLAGGIO DELL'ETÀ DEL BRONZO MEDIO DI PORTELLA A SALINA NELLE ISOLE EOLIE, edited by Maria Clara Martinelli. Pp. 339, figs. 125, pls. 16. Istituto Italiano di Preistoria e Protostoria, Florence 2005. €65. ISBN 88-6045-016-0 (cloth).

This useful book deals with the results of recent archaeological research carried out by the author at Portella on the island of Salina in the Aeolian archipelago (for earlier excavations, see L. Bernabò Brea and M. Cavalier, *Meligunis Lipàra* 3 [Palermo 1968] 144–80). The Middle Bronze Age settlement belongs to the Milazzese culture (contemporary with Mycenaean III A–B).

Martinelli provides a detailed description of the finds inside the huts (35–114), and an appendix analyzes the soil's granulometry (115–21) and three open spaces near the huts (125–34). Another chapter concerns building techniques (137–45), the reconstruction of a hut (coauthored by L. Lopes [146–47]), and the topography of the village (148–53). A separate section deals with items of daily use found in the huts (157–84), including nonlocal pottery, most coming from the Italian mainland (Apennine culture) but also a few sherds of a Cypriot pithos. This section ends with a reconstruction of the distribution of the vessels in the huts (184–200) and a number of plans that help the reader to understand the organization of space inside the structures.

Three appendices by Levi and Martinelli contain a catalogue of the *exotica* from the village (201–5), a study of the Aeolian “potters' marks” (Martelli [211–29]), an analysis of the stone tools (Martinelli [230–39]), and an intriguing archaeometric analysis carried out on the local pottery (Levi and Jones [243–62]). Other sections concern the archaeobotanic analysis of samples from Hut O (Fiorentino [265–73]), the vegetal environment of Salina (Lo Cascio [274–77]), ethnographic comparisons between local huts

and modern rural buildings in northeastern Sicily (Lopes and Martinelli [281–85]), and radiocarbon dates (Calderoni and Martinelli [289–97]).

In the final section (301–20), Martinelli and Bietti Sestieri cleverly situate Salina in the broader frame of geography and trade in the Aeolian archipelago and central Mediterranean (cf. A.M. Bietti Sestieri, “Un modello per l'interazione fra oriente e occidente mediterranei nel secondo millennio A.C.: Il ruolo delle grandi isole,” in *Atti della XXXV Riunione Scientifica Istituto Italiano Preistoria e Protostoria in memoria di L. Bernabò Brea, Lipari, 2–7.06.2000* [Florence 2003] 557–86).

The book's strength lies in its multidisciplinary approach, partially realized by Bernabò Brea's last publications about the Bronze Age settlements on Lipari and Filicudi (L. Bernabò Brea and M. Cavalier, *Meligunis Lipàra* 4 [Palermo 1980]; 6 [Palermo 1991]).

Archaeologically, the book centers on the huts. The description of the stratigraphy is accompanied by a section of each structure's fill and by plans of each stratigraphic unit. The findings, listed layer by layer, are given numbers that are easily identifiable on the plans. While contexts and finds are similar to those excavated by Bernabò Brea, the quality of the information is greater. The book makes it possible to reconstruct a body of evidence not always intelligible in the previous publications: the space distribution in the huts, how vessels and other finds fit these spaces, and the stratigraphy inside each structure. As for the third point, Martinelli provides a clever reconstruction of the dynamics leading to the formation of the huts' internal stratigraphy. This information is also useful for solving some problems inherent in the stratigraphy of the earlier excavations on the island, as well as on Lipari and Filicudi. Regarding the finds, it is worth noting the great number of drawings, not always available in previous publications, especially for local pottery types. As for the “pot marks,” although it is clear that these signs relate to pottery production, their deeper meaning is still elusive—they do not, however, relate to storage practices (M. Marazzi, “Le scritture eoliane: i segni grafici sulle ceramiche,” in S. Tusa, ed., *Prima Sicilia, alle origini della società siciliana* [Palermo 1997] 459–71). It seems, therefore, that the Aeolian Middle Bronze Age communities were characterized by a domestic economy (cf. K. Kilian, “Mycenaean Colonisation: Norm and Variety,” in J.P. Descoedres, ed., *Greek Colonist and Native Populations* [Oxford 1990] 456).

The sections containing the archaeometric and radiocarbon analyses are particularly intriguing. Clay compositions reveal a complex circulation of the raw material for pottery production that involves the Aeolian archipelago, northern Sicily, and southern Italy. It is noteworthy that Apennine-like vessels were not only imported but were also locally made on the Aeolian islands and perhaps in northern Sicily (on foreign pottery in Thapsos, see G. Alberti, “Per una ‘gerarchia sociale’ a Thapsos: analisi contestuale delle evidenze funerarie e segni di stratificazione,” *Rivista di Scienze Preistoriche* 55 [2006] 369–428). The presence of sherds of a Cypriot pithos (the clay composition is purely Cypriot) demonstrates that Cypriot imports were not confined to Sicily and Sardinia, as has traditionally been thought. It seems striking that Cypriot pithoi were used in open areas, perhaps in conjunction with local containers used for the same practical purpose. This should make us cautious about judging the “meaning” or the

"appreciation" of foreign items by locals: the value attached to *exotica* derives from the local culture into which imports arrive and from existing indigenous categories of value (cf. M. Dietler, "Driven by Drink: The Role of Drinking in the Political Economy and the Case of Early Iron Age France," *JAnthArch* 9 [1990] 352–406; G.J. van Wijngaarden, "An Archaeological Approach to the Concept of Value: Mycenaean Pottery at Ugarit (Syria)," *Archaeological Dialogues* 6 [1999] 2–23).

The radiocarbon dates are of great relevance. We now have two series of calibrated dates: the first (level of confidence = 68.3%) points to a date of 1525 ± 1320 B.C.E., while the second (level of confidence = 95.4%) indicates 1605 ± 1260 B.C.E. While there are radiocarbon dates from contemporary Sicilian sites (pace Martinelli; cf. R. Leighton, *Sicily before History* [London 1999] 272), there is a striking match between the first date and radiocarbon dates for the Apennine levels of Coppa Nevigata (15th–14th centuries B.C.E.) on the Italian mainland. If confirmed, this more narrow date could also suggest that Cypriot western activities were already going on in the 14th century B.C.E., and not mainly (or exclusively) in the 13th.

In conclusion, the multidisciplinary approach of Martinelli's work, its accurate organization and presentation (with broad discussion chapters and with a great number and variety of illustrations), not to mention the quick publication of the excavation and the abundance of fresh data, all make this book a must for specialists in Italian and Mediterranean prehistory.

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**MYCENAEAN FORTIFICATIONS, HIGHWAYS, DAMS AND CANALS**, by R. Hope Simpson and D.K. Hagel (*SIMA* 133). Pp. 254, figs. 16, pls. 43. Paul Åströms Förlag, Sävedalen 2006. \$247.50. ISBN 91-7081-212-8 (paper).

This volume does exactly what it says on the cover. But why combine a study of Mycenaean fortifications, highways, dams, and canals? Neither the preface nor the summary makes this entirely clear, though it is suggested that the purpose of these major Mycenaean construction projects was "control over man, and so far as possible, over nature" (225). From this perspective, certain key themes do emerge.

The chapter on fortifications begins with a discussion of their function, which is seen as primarily defensive. There may have been an element of display, but this was intended to discourage enemy attacks. Given that there is no evidence for the use of siege engines, the sheer size of some of the walls would doubtless have been a deterrent. Yet if "the security both of the agricultural produce and of the population" (23) was a major concern, why do many of the circuits leave

so much of the settlement unprotected? The suggestion that the fortifications were also an expression of the power of the rulers must have been a significant factor. The description of the construction techniques used for Cyclopean walls emphasizes the need for the core to be kept moist and suggests that mud was packed between the stones to seal the interior and exterior faces. However, it is difficult to believe that the core would not have dried out over time.

The gazetteer of Mycenaean fortification walls is extremely useful. The emphasis is on the lesser sites and so the accounts of Mycenae, Tiryns, and Athens, for example, are quite brief. As well as mainland sites, the Ionian Islands, the Cyclades, and the Dodecanese are included. In each case, the date of the walls is carefully considered and a distinction is made between those that are definitely or probably/possibly Mycenaean. Also discussed are some of the walls for which a Mycenaean date has been proposed but which are adjudged to be later, such as the watchtowers in the Argolid and Corinthia.

A point the gazetteer underlines is how much variation there is across Greece in the number of fortified sites. They feature prominently in the northeast Peloponnese but scarcely, if at all, in Laconia. The early enthusiasm for fortifications in Messenia, at Pylos, Peristeria, and Malthi fades away in Late Helladic (LH) IIIA–B, though geophysical survey has detected what may be a circuit around the entire lower town at Pylos. If confirmed, this would imply that the rulers of Pylos had different priorities than their counterparts in the Argolid. Attica is of interest because of the early fortifications at Kiapha Thiti and possibly Brauron, followed in LH IIIB by the Athenian Acropolis, a citadel of the Argive type. Fortifications proliferated in Boeotia, particularly in LH IIIB, when the network of fortresses around Kopais was constructed. However, doubts are raised about the date of some of the circuit walls in Thessaly, such as at Petra. The chapter on fortifications ends with the enigmatic Cyclopean wall on the Isthmus of Corinth. It is argued that this must be Mycenaean, most likely LH IIIB2, was defensive, and once ran across this isthmus, though no sections of the wall have been found west of the sanctuary at Isthmia, quite some distance from the Gulf of Corinth.

Most of the evidence for Mycenaean highways comes from the Argolid. As the surface was a soft layer of soil, pebbles, and sand, these roads must have been constructed for chariots rather than heavy carts so that troops could be deployed rapidly. It is assumed that similar road systems once existed in Messenia, since the Linear B tablets from Pylos mention chariots, and also in Boeotia, but these have proved elusive.

The chapter on dams and canals begins with two more construction projects in the Argolid. The Ayios Yeoryios bridge, just south of Mycenae, may in fact have been a reservoir dam, while the Tiryns dam was built to divert the Manessi River. Even more impressive is the remarkable system of canals and dams in the Kopais, which is linked with the fortification of Gla. The detailed account of the remains emphasizes how much has been destroyed in recent years. Also included in this chapter is the possible Mycenaean harbor at Pylos. These were ambitious projects that would have stretched the resources of even the wealthiest palace. Moreover, much of this construction activity was undertaken in LH IIIB and ultimately may have proved more costly than