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Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies
Stockholm University
106 91 Stockholm, Sweden
secretary@ecsi.se | editor@ecsi.se

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Eddy.se AB
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D.M. Smith, W.G. Cavanagh & A. Papadopoulos, eds, *The wider island of Pelops. Studies on prehistoric Aegean pottery in honour of Professor Christopher Mee*, Oxford: Archaeopress 2023. 278 pp., 147 ills. ISBN 978-1-80327-328-0. <http://doi.org/10.32028/9781803273280>

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The wider island of Pelops aims to present recent work on prehistoric Aegean pottery, in a significant and valuable contribution to the discipline. The volume is dedicated in honour of Professor Christopher Mee, from whom this author had the benefit of tutelage at the University of Liverpool, where he worked from 1979 until his death in 2013. The volume, so titled due to Mee's connection to the archaeology of the Peloponnese, is the result of the eponymous conference held at the British School at Athens in 2017, organized by two of Mee's former students, David Michael Smith and Angelos Papadopoulos, also volume editors, along with his long-term collaborator William Cavanagh.

The focus of the book is placed on theoretical, contextual and scientific approaches to ceramics covering a wide range of locations, from Attica to Cyprus, though the majority of contributions concern Mee's own main area of research, the Peloponnese. The volume hosts 17 scholarly contributions, initially offered at the conference, illuminating the cultural and chronological significance of Aegean pottery in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. The book is introduced with a preface summarizing the following chapters, before a chapter dedicated to Mee's life, work and achievements. The book is well-illustrated with high-quality colour images throughout, which really aid comprehension of the subject matter. A minor criticism is the book's lack of a thematic, geographic or chronological organization. While this does not detract from the quality of the individual contributions, a more structured approach could have facilitated a clearer narrative of regional developments in prehistoric Aegean ceramics. This review, therefore, opts to discuss the contributions according to geographic region rather than the (alphabetic) order in which they appear in the book.

Several contributions deal with **Laconia**, especially in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. Territoriality, unity and division can be inferred from the spatial positioning of ceramics at Middle Neolithic and Late Neolithic **Kouphovouno** (William Cavanagh & Josette Renard). Clusters in the dispersed Middle Neolithic settlement pattern are an indication of social territoriality. New Late Neolithic pottery styles emerge alongside continuing Middle Neolithic wares (*Urfinis*), though classic Middle Neolithic shapes are absent in Late Neolithic wares, and *vice versa*. New communal pottery forms reflect the increasingly important role of material culture in mediating relationships between different social groups.

Pottery from burials in the **Skoini** 3 and 4 caves in the Mani peninsula provide a glimpse into Final Neolithic funer-

ary practices (Stella Katsarou & Andreas Darlas). A difference in the treatment of the sexes is inferred from the two burials in Skoini 3—one male and one female—with the male buried with grave offerings, while the female lacked her skull and offerings. The lack of a skull suggests some kind of secondary treatment and a deliberately broken pithos deposited into the grave is interpreted as a symbolic act. The role of caves as “transcendent, dramatic and protective place(s)” challenges their marginalization in previous research, highlighting how structured norms of mortuary practice were played out and experienced in the caves of the Mani.

Ceramic deposits from the **Geraki** acropolis (Joost Crouwel) help sketch the site's history. Geraki I (Final Neolithic) deposits mostly concern food preparation, storage and consumption. An overview of the spatial distribution of Early Helladic II Geraki II ware reveals its presence predominantly in Laconia, with little indication of its dispersal beyond the region. Geraki III (Early Helladic IIB) saw the strengthening of the Early Helladic II fortification, with the addition of a casemate room. Geraki III was abandoned after a fire and reoccupied later in the Middle Helladic after an interlude of desertion.

The Early Helladic III period has been a problematic phase for much of the Peloponnese, and Laconia has been no exception. The publication of the Early Helladic III site at **Mouhteika** (Aris Papayiannis) then is a welcome contribution. The site bears evidence for subterranean buildings and several Early Helladic pits, though later activity may have eradicated more substantial Early Helladic structural remains. Drinking shapes develop out of the Lefkandi I/Kastri Group rather than the Laconian Early Helladic II, though so-called ouzo cups are scarce, representing a divergence from practices seen elsewhere in the Peloponnese.

To the latter end of the Bronze Age, study of the Mycenaean pottery from **Ayios Vasileios** in Laconia (Eleftheria Kardamaki, Vasco Hachtmann, Adamantia Vasilogamvrou, Nektarios Karadimas & Sofia Voutsaki) shows a remarkable divergence in pottery consumption compared to the Argolic palatial centres. Plain and monochrome pottery dominated Late Helladic IIIA2 tableware, with kylikes conspicuously rare in the deposits, unlike in the Argolid where they are common. Laconian ceramic production held a local character, particularly in drinking and serving vessels, contrasting with the high-quality status objects produced in palaces of the Argolid.

In south-east Laconia, the “**Post-Palatial Laconian Maritime Landscape**” is a dynamic area with a network of overseas contacts (Chrysanthi Gallou, Jon Henderson, Elias Spondylis & William Cavanagh). Ceramic synchronisms indicate that Pavlopetri and Epidauros Limera were pivotal nodes in Late Helladic IIIC–Submycenaean contact networks, underscoring the importance of maritime contact networks in the challenging postpalatial period.

A cluster of contributions concern the **north-eastern Peloponnese** and **Attica**. Analysis of Late Neolithic–Final Neolithic and Early Helladic I pottery from **Midea**, aided by petrographic and microscopic techniques, provides a window into local ceramic production (Eva Alram-Stern, Clare Burke, Katie Demakopoulou & Peter Day). The Late Neolithic deposit contained many fine wares, particularly deep bowls, suggesting a focus on standardized “commensal acts” related to food consumption. Petrography revealed the continuation in the use of grog as a temper between Late Neolithic and Final Neolithic, interpreted by the authors as an attempt to “link past to present”, associating new vessels with older, successful examples.

The use of cutting-edge marine exploration technology allows for an exploration of submerged stone structures at the exciting settlement at **Lambayanna** in the Argolid, close to Franchthi Cave in the Bay of Koilada (Julien Beck, Patrizia Birchler Emery & Despina Koutsoumba). Potsherds indicate an Early Helladic II dating for the submerged site, which notably appears to have been fortified.

Comprehension of the earliest phases at **Mycenae** continues to prove a formidable task, chiefly due to the presence of subsequent Late Helladic constructions (Elizabeth French †). Nonetheless, vestiges from the Neolithic and Early Helladic periods are occasionally reported, albeit dislocated from their original contexts. Fieldwalking survey in the hinterland of the site serves to corroborate cartographic work undertaken by Bernhard Steffen in the 19th century, though potsherds of any period are rare beyond the immediate environs of the settlement.

The ceramic and habitation narratives of **Kolonna** and **Korakou** offer an intriguing blend of convergences and divergences (Walter Gauss). Until the end of the Early Helladic period, both Kolonna and Korakou exhibit comparable developmental trajectories, though a divergence arises with Kolonna emerging as a Middle Helladic ceramic powerhouse, distinguished by the presence of Middle Cycladic and Middle Minoan imports—rarities at Middle Helladic Korakou. A peculiarity is the chronological dissonance between the presence of sand-tempered Aiginetian sherds, a Middle Helladic ceramic innovation, in Early Helladic II layers at Korakou, indicating significant contamination of excavated deposits at Korakou.

Attica’s role as a vital conduit between the Helladic and Cycladic cultural spheres is becoming increasingly clearer (Margarita Nazou). Attica exhibits continuous variation in pottery styles through time, making a definition of a coherent ceramic style zone impossible. Differing geographical zones (mountain, coast, valley) exhibit differing ceramic styles, though coastal Attica, Kea and southern Euboea emerge as a distinct ceramic interaction zone in Final Neolithic–Early Helladic II.

The Late Helladic IIIC ceramic assemblage from **Aigeira** contains some peculiarities (Jeremy Rutter). One such is the imported “*rotbrauner Hartware*” (“fine reddish brown hard-fired ware”), which appears in substantial quantities in the earlier Late Helladic IIIC phases. Handmade burnished ware is also present, though the coterminous existence of coarse ware cooking pots suggests that such vessels may have been display pieces or used in special contexts.

The final cluster of papers concern **Aegean island** and **Cypriot** contributions. In response to the implications of recent radiocarbon analyses on Aegean **chronology** (Robin Barber), the placement of the Cycladic “Geometric” ware at the beginning of the Middle Cycladic period is disputed, with an Early Cycladic IIIB date advocated instead. This interpretation is realized through the identification of Cycladic “Geometric” imports in pre-Middle Helladic Mainland contexts and the uncertainties of dating Akrotiri Phase A to the start of the Middle Cycladic.

Through a presentation and analysis of coarse ware pottery, a range of eating practices are surmised at **Phylakopi** throughout the Bronze Age (David Michael Smith). A discernible Cycladic culinary tradition can be observed in the late Early Cycladic and early Middle Cycladic ceramic record of the site, which later yields to shapes indicative of Minoan and Mycenaean culinary habits, affirming that shifts in “foodways” paralleled other transformations in material culture during the Late Bronze Age. Publishing coarse ware assemblages from other sites should boost understanding of this underappreciated ceramic class Aegean-wide.

Mycenaean pottery from **Kourion** Site D on Cyprus is presented in the context of the 1895 British Museum excavations (Angelos Papadopoulos). Aegean and Cypriot pottery enrich the understanding of local chronology but also shed light on mechanisms of trade and exchange, as well as behavioural patterns related to consumption in Late Bronze Age Cypriot communities.

The **Leska Peak Sanctuary** on Kythera (Mercurios Georgiadis) adds to a growing number of extra-Cretan peak sanctuaries in the Aegean. The Middle Minoan–Late Minoan I ceramic assemblage is dominated by drinking cups, bowls and tripod cooking vessels. The assemblage suggests the transport of pre-prepared foodstuffs, though animal bones were a notable absence, interpreted as a possible social taboo against meat consumption at the site. A lack of architectural remains marks a similarity with the better-known Ayios Georgios sto Vouno peak sanctuary on Kythera.

The ubiquity of **ritual pyres** at Minoan peak sanctuaries is brought into question (Iphiyenia Tournavitou). Evidence for actual burning can be attested archaeologically at just over 50% of peak sanctuaries, making this a common, though not homogeneous practice in Minoan religion. Based on the ceramics, this practice has a Protopalatial and

Neopalatial focus, which marks a trend identified at several other peak sanctuaries.

The wider island of Pelops is a substantial contribution to ceramic studies in the Aegean, highlighting the central role pottery played in the lives of prehistoric people and how fundamental it still is to the discipline. For the ceramic enthusiast, an index allowing for targeted reading would have been a welcome addition and the lack of a contribution concerning the Dodecanese is also a missed opportunity, given Mee's association with the island of Rhodes through his doctoral work. The initial chapter detailing his life ('Professor Christopher Mee [1950–2013]'), however, serves as a poignant and a touching tribute to a remarkable scholar and human being, a sentiment echoed through the combined effort of the contributors to this volume.

CHRISTOPHER NUTTALL

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens &

Swedish Institute at Athens

Mitseon 9

117 42 Athens, Greece

chris.nuttall@sia.gr

J. Neils & S.M. Dunn, eds, *Hippos. The horse in ancient Athens*. *ΙΠΠΟΣ. Το άλογο στην αρχαία Αθήνα*, Athens: American School of Classical Studies at Athens 2022, 288 pp. ISBN: 978-960-99945-6-9.

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This handsome bilingual (English and Greek) volume was produced to accompany and document the ambitious exhibition on the horse in ancient Athens organized by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA) in early 2022. The exhibition may be seen on the still functioning site <https://hippos.gr>, and a series of eight lectures held in conjunction with the exhibition is available on the ASCSA YouTube channel. Outside of art history, exhibition volumes are only seldom of much use to the researcher, although once in a while a gem comes along. I still think fondly of the rewarding volume *An obsession with fortune. Tyche in Greek and Roman art* (ed. S.B. Matheson, 1994), based on an art exhibition at the Yale Gallery. Similarly, by drawing together various aspects on the subject of horses in ancient Athens and offering brief bibliographies at the close of each section, the present book can be of use to both researchers and teachers in classics or related fields.

After a brief introduction, we find five thematic parts, each with a varying number of subsections, each bar one with its own introduction. All these introductions are uncredited but may be assumed to be the work of the editors, who also sup-

ply several of the separate articles: Jenifer Neils, at the time Director of the ASCSA, wrote eight of the pieces, Shannon Dunn, a Ph.D. student at Bryn Mawr, wrote two. Most of the other contributors are also Ph.D. candidates, while some are established researchers and teachers, mostly though not all in archaeology. These are: Emmanuel Aprilakis, Will Austen, Jeffrey Banks, Amanda Bell, Anna Belza, John Mck. Camp, Stella Chrysoulaki, Flint Dibble, Paul G. Johnston, Kevin S. Lee, Rebecca Levitan, Luke Madson, Anne McCabe, Mara McNiff, Alessandra Migliara, Joe Miller, Sarah M. Norvell, Olga Palagia, Ioannis Pappas, Rush Rehm, Rebecca A. Salem, Alan Shapiro, Tyler Jo Smith, Peter Thompson and Elena Walter-Karydi. Carol Mattusch is the sole contributor without a university position: she is an equestrian herself and writes essays on horses (here the one on Xenophon). The individual pieces are short, usually 2–3 (A4) pages, although they take up double the space, since each piece is also given in modern Greek (translations by Maria Michalarou and Ioanna Damanaki).

The volume is richly illustrated with photographs; sometimes these are duplicated in the Greek sections, sometimes different ones are included there. The authors are competent within their fields; the volume as a whole seeks to present the work of the ASCSA in archaeology, art history, science and classics. Many of the titles of the individual pieces are framed as questions, sometimes ones that I have asked myself, more usually ones that would never have occurred to me without prompting.

The first and briefest part deals with 'Horse skeletons' in three sections: 'Where did Greek horses come from?' (possibly the Russian steppes), and then two sections specifically about the Phaleron horse skeletons (these could have been better cross-referenced with the later treatment about horse sacrifices): 'About horses at the Phaleron Delta' and 'What does science tell us about the Phaleron horses?' I did not know much about these finds previously, so this section was enlightening to me.

Part 2 is entitled 'Hippotrophia' (horse-breeding) and covers eleven interesting sections: 'What is the first horse in Athenian art?', 'Why do horses serve as handles on Geometric pyxides?', 'What was the meaning of horse-head amphoras?', 'Who was the first Greek to write a book about horses?', 'What does Xenophon tell us about horses?', 'Tack, or what you need to ride a horse', 'How were the Athenian youth involved in hippic culture?', 'What were common horse names?', 'What humans had names with Hippo-/ippos in them and what does this mean?', 'Why do early Attic coins have equine imagery?' and 'A warrior's departure'. The final section deals with a particularly beautiful amphora attributed to the Painter of Munich (from Vulci, c. 530 BC, Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum inv. 61/89). Parts 2–5 are more or less of this structure: very particular questions in archaeology, history or literature, often ending with a focused piece or pieces more related to art history.