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**THE GREEK MEDITERRANEAN IN THE BRONZE AGE. L. Steel**  
*Materiality and Consumption in the Bronze Age Mediterranean.*  
(Routledge Studies in Archaeology 7.) Pp. xviii + 263, ills, map. New  
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Neapolitan team presents a workmanlike geoarchaeological report on two Campanian sequences, but avoids the bigger picture. In a different league altogether is D. Keenan-Jones' riveting piece on the cultural politics of water diversion in the Tiber valley and for the Acqua Augusta, which is outstanding for its ambitious combination of hydraulic, literary and archaeological information, as well as its exploration of the afterlife and consequences of such ancient projects, right up to the present day.

The papers in this volume neatly exemplify the prospects and problems ahead if a successful marriage of environmental—and especially climatic—sciences and the Classical world is to become a reality. As H. states, they primarily address the former's impact on the latter, and tacitly evade the symmetrical issue of what ancient Greece and Rome might tell us about wider planetary transformations in this regard. Now that, for a discipline intending to affirm its place on a drastically changing Earth, is another very good question indeed.

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## THE GREEK MEDITERRANEAN IN THE BRONZE AGE

STEEL (L.) *Materiality and Consumption in the Bronze Age Mediterranean*. (Routledge Studies in Archaeology 7.) Pp. xviii + 263, ills, map. New York and London: Routledge, 2013. Cased, £80, US \$125. ISBN: 978-0-415-53734-6.

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S. synthesises anthropological approaches to cultural contact in the archaeology of the Bronze Age Mediterranean; although in this book the Mediterranean is mostly defined by Cyprus, the Greek mainland, the Cyclades and Crete. In Chapter 1 S. introduces core concepts of the book like 'connectivity', 'hybridization' and '*habitus*'. Such concepts facilitate an understanding of the relationship between material culture and the negotiation of social roles and identities, as through time, the foreign and the exotic became increasingly 'entangled' (another oft-used word in the book) in local traditions in the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean.

Developments of migration and colonisation are revisited in Chapter 2, showing how these previously contentious terms have become acceptable in Anglophone scholarship with the agency-oriented approaches of post-processual archaeology. Considerations of agency have diminished the essentialism of migration models, and the elitism and cultural biases of colonisation models. The first case study addresses interactions between Minoans and non-Cretan populations throughout the Aegean. By foregrounding the local context of Minoan colonisation and the *habitus* of urbanising Minoan lifestyles, in particular status-enhancing religious practices and the local, selective and creative embrace of Minoan high culture on islands like Kythera and Kea, S. avoids the uni-directional models that have dominated discussions of Minoan expansion throughout the twentieth century. In another case study, the Aegean character of object assemblages and architecture on Cyprus in the twelfth century highlights the presence of Mycenaean migrants within the unstable milieu of the end of the Bronze Age. Here, social identities were fluidly negotiated between locals and migrants in the context of geographically extensive population movements.

Chapter 3 is the most explicitly ‘post-colonial’ in the book, drawing heavily on the works of Gosden, van Dommelen and others. The chapter begins with an examination of mixed Mycenaean and Minoan features in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae, the palace of LM II-III Knossos, or the Warrior Burials near Knossos. With concepts like ‘hybridization’ or the ‘middle ground’, S. emphasises the local context of cultural contacts and offers a socially nuanced interpretation of interactions between Crete and the Greek mainland during the Late Bronze Age (LBA). Objects and assemblages from LBA Cyprus are treated similarly, in particular the reception of orientalisising cylinder seals and faience objects, and Aegeanising ‘pastoral style’ painted pottery. But non-local influences are understood to have been more pervasive in Cypriot society than anywhere else in the eastern Mediterranean.

The relevance of anthropological approaches to gift exchange is the focus of Chapter 4. Building from Mauss’ seminal writings on *kula* exchange, S. suggests that similar relationships were initiated in Crete in the transition from the third to the second millennium. Objects and materials of Egyptian origin were acquired by Minoan seafarers and circulated as symbolically charged and prestige-elevating objects within the gift-exchange networks of emergent elites on Crete. In the following centuries the spheres of Minoan gift exchange would widen, culminating in long-distance diplomatic relationships, for example as they are illustrated in Minoan gift-giving scenes in Egyptian tomb paintings. Less direct evidence for gift-giving is considered in the identification of Minoan Kamares ware and other forms of Minoan craftsmanship across the eastern Mediterranean. The fine ware pottery may have been introduced by Minoans in politically salient feasting contexts in the Levant or Egypt where gifts would have also been exchanged. Skilled Minoan craftsman may have also been exchanged as gifts, which S. proposes in an interpretation of the Minoan-style wall paintings in Hyksos and Levantine palaces.

Other forms of long-distance exchange are examined in Chapter 5, beginning with a discussion of the relationship between (inalienable) gifts and (alienable) commodities. S. is careful to note that an object like a Mycenaean stirrup jar can be manufactured and transhipped as a commodity but exchanged or consumed as a gift. Nevertheless, the mass-export of Mycenaean stirrup jars in the LBA represents the unprecedented commodification of pottery and its contents (oil) in the eastern Mediterranean, opening up the possibility for commercially-motivated trade networks that existed alongside politically-motivated gift-giving. The following section addresses the archaeology of merchant activity and the agency of merchants in contexts of commercial and palatial (gift) exchange, with an emphasis on evidence from the LBA Uluburun shipwreck. Less convincingly, the discussion of merchants turns to evidence like a burial on Cyprus (the so-called ‘Seafarers Tomb’ at Karmi *Palealona*) or conspicuous concentrations of Mycenaean figurines at Ugarit and other port cities in the Levant. The chapter concludes, somewhat incongruously, by considering how *orientalia* in LBA graves and other ritual contexts in Cyprus were used in the negotiation of elite identities. This section would have fitted better in the ‘Entangled Worlds’ of Chapter 3.

In Chapter 6 S. focuses on craft specialisation with a similar concern for the agency and special status of craftsmen, drawing heavily on authors like Gell and Helms in analyses of ivory carvings and bronze stands. The *chaîne opératoire* of such objects is a key consideration, emphasising the distant (and potentially supernatural) origins of materials like ivory or metal, and the esoteric knowledge of the craft specialist whose ‘enchanting’ skills are defined by the ability to transform distantly-procured raw materials into symbolically potent and desirable objects. The chapter concludes with a discussion of pottery in Bronze Age Cyprus. Here S. is less concerned with the enchanting aspects of craftsmanship, focusing rather on the more prosaic contexts of pottery’s production and consumption.

Chapter 7 develops a biographical approach to a range of objects identified in Crete, the Greek mainland and Cyprus. S. suggests that widely circulated scarabs and Egyptian stone vases inscribed with royal cartouches gained their value in long-distance gift-exchange networks through their association both with an illustrious pharaoh, and with the string of elites who owned the object previously. Ceramic objects from Cyprus are thought to have been biographical in a different sense. Use-wear on Mycenaean kraters deposited in graves reveals the long life-histories of these objects. Here the krater was used as commensal furniture in commemorative events that marked culturally significant transformations in the deceased person's life, for example in a birth, marriage, or death. Red Polished plank figurines are understood to be biographical for similar reasons, and were used in similar contexts. Alternatively, the biography of the Vonous bowl relates less to its use, and more to the complex 'biographical' scene of the plastic decoration, which S. suggests depicts transformative stages of an important man's life: progressing from birth, puberty, to his ascendance to the status of elder and eventually ancestor.

The concluding Chapter 8 is a cursory if rushed overview of the book's dominant themes, and offers little in the way of insightful synthesis. This book can be read in two ways. It is a useful overview of Anglophone interactionist approaches to Bronze Age archaeology of the eastern Mediterranean. It will be valued by students, or by specialists who are not well-acquainted with anthropological approaches to the Bronze Age archaeology of this region. As such, it can be read like a 'handbook'. But as a research monograph it is predictable, and slavishly adheres to the Anglophone mainstream of Mediterranean prehistory where the Bronze Age Mediterranean equates with the Greek mainland, Crete, the Cyclades and Cyprus. Bar LBA shipwrecks, I was dismayed that the archaeology of coastal Anatolia was entirely excluded from this study. A critical reader might also be wary of the overuse of words like 'hybridization', 'enchantment', 'entanglement' and '*habitus*'. These powerful concepts risk becoming anodyne, or worse jargon, in their overuse. Likewise, the book's claim to challenge 'reductive' approaches to the Bronze Age Mediterranean is a straw man. Quotations from J. Boardman, for example, are a favourite target of critique. The book would have been more interesting if it had engaged with continental European approaches to the past, in particular German-language scholarship, which historically has maintained a long interest in problems related to diffusion and culture contact between east and west, and which has also evolved in the sophistication of its approaches. This raises a related point: I counted 11 non-English language publications in an extensive bibliography: half of these were the monographs of acceptable French authors like Bourdieu, Mauss and Braudel, translated into English.

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## PYLIAN NAMES IN LINEAR B

NAKASSIS (D.) *Individuals and Society in Mycenaean Pylos.* (*Mnemosyne* Supplements 358.) Pp. xviii + 448, figs, ill., maps. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013. Cased, €123, US\$171. ISBN: 978-90-04-24451-1.  
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N.'s monograph is a redacted and updated version of his doctoral dissertation for the University of Texas ('The Individual and the Mycenaean State' [2006]). His simple and