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Eric Cline (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean*. Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. xxxiii & 930. £100. ISBN 978-0-19-536-550-4 (Hbk).

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By bringing together a wealth of scholars specialising in the Bronze Age Aegean and wider area, Eric Cline aims to produce the definitive handbook for this period. These scholars contribute sixty-six papers, which are broken down into four sections: Background and Definitions; Chronology and Geography; Thematic Topics; and Specific Sites and Regions. This review will focus specifically on the latter two parts.

Part III is subdivided into five sections (Art and Architecture; Society and Culture; Seals and Writing/Administration Systems; Material Crafts; and Events). Each section includes four to six papers and the topics dealt with are generally divided into 'Minoan' and 'Mycenaean'. This may be considered as far too simplistic a divide, especially concerning religion, as the two belief systems are not easily separated. This issue is fully noted by Susan Lupack (p.270), however, and both her papers on religion are succinct and provide a balanced overview of the evidence and scholarly research. The 'Minoan' and 'Mycenaean' divide is not used for the paper on frescoes, with the result that the mainland frescoes are allotted only two and a half pages. A 'Crete and Cyclades' and 'Mainland Greece' division may have been preferable in this case, but the paper is nonetheless a good introduction to the topic.

The papers on Minoan and Mycenaean Seals and Sealings are written, respectively, by Judith Weingarten and John Younger, both experts in the field. Both chapters are slightly tainted by the reliance on stylistic groups. Younger devotes two pages to outlining four of the key 'Major Mycenaean, or Mycenaean-Inspired, Stylistic Groups', which has been his topic of research since the 1960s. This dates the book, as the discipline has been moving away from such art-analysis methods and all stylistic groups, with the exception of the 'Mainland Popular Group', are generally dismissed by other scholars. That said, Younger's section on seal-use in the Mycenaean palaces goes into impressive depth in only three pages, well fulfilling Cline's aim that

the book should 'prove useful to professional scholars' (p.xxxiii). Similarly, Weingarten's chapter goes further than simply outlining current scholarship and provides insight into her current research area. Moreover, both papers benefit from the recent (re-)publications of sealings from Ayia Triadha, Zakros, and, especially, Knossos. Similarly, Thomas Palaima's chapter on the Mycenaean writing system is up-to-date, outlining very recent scholarship and new technical advances. He also takes the opportunity to point out some flaws in previous publications. The included table of Linear B signs will prove a very useful reference tool for students of the topic.

The last chapter in Part III deals with Events, specifically the Eruption of Thera/Santorini (Sturt Manning), the Trojan War (Trevor Bryce), and the Collapse at the End of the Bronze Age (Oliver Dickinson). Bryce's account (which cites archaeological evidence and contemporary and later documentation) provides a good, well-rounded introduction to the subject. He even manages to fit in a brief outline of the later political significance that the site of Troy held. Similarly, Dickinson not only outlines the Collapse itself and the causes put forward by scholars to explain it but persuasively argues for a more sustained Collapse that had numerous factors. Manning's chapter is definitely the most technical and scientific of the three and has a much more in-depth bibliography that would certainly prove useful to professionals.

Part IV is subdivided into four sections (Crete; Mainland Greece; Cyclades, Dodecanese and Saronic Islands; and the Wider Mediterranean). Each section includes four to ten papers and many of the papers choose to provide an overview of the history of their chosen site whilst simultaneously discussing the history of excavation or any particularly relevant debates or issues. This may seem a somewhat simplistic approach but it enables many of the scholars to provide a balanced and extremely useful overview of the relevant evidence and scholarly research. Indeed many of the sites receive a surprisingly detailed analysis considering the brevity of the papers.

Within the sub-section dedicated to Crete Colin Macdonald provides a detailed and comprehensive overview of the site Knossos. An infamous site with a wealth of material already published, it would have been easy for this paper to be lacklustre or simply too general to be of any use. Instead Macdonald gives us a systematic and methodical analysis of the site; breaking it down by its chronological phases and within each phase discussing the key events, features and developments. In comparison, Jan Driessen's approach in his paper on Malia is not as clear or methodical, but this is a minor complaint as Driessen's paper is rich in depth and quality of analysis. The paper focuses upon the contribution Malia – in particular its rich and well preserved Middle Bronze Age remains – has made to Minoan archaeology. The archaeological information is discussed and analysed at length and interestingly Driessen also provides some insight into the history and development of excavation at the site.

The final part of Part IV is dedicated to the wider Mediterranean and includes papers not only on regions such as Egypt and the Levant but also papers on two of the most infamous ancient shipwrecks: the Cape Gelidonya and Uluburun shipwrecks. The site of Troy is represented via a paper by Peter Jablonka who provides an interesting but unfortunately simplistic overview of the history of the site and also of its excavations. His information is sound if basic and the various arguments regarding its identity – is it in fact the location of Homer's Trojan War? - are presented in a clear and concise manner but his detail is lacking, his approach at times rushed and he never really discusses any of the issues with any significant depth. Conversely, when faced with what could potentially be a large and unwieldy topic – the Levant in terms of the Aegean world – Assaf Yasur-Landau tackles the topic in a methodical but exceptionally detailed manner. Choosing to narrow the potential subject matter by specifically only dealing with the impact of the Aegean on the Levant, Yassur-Landau successfully provides not only an overview of the evidence from the archaeological record for relations but also provides insight into the Late Bronze Age world system, trade patterns and pottery styles. Alan Greaves provides the penultimate paper in the book and moves away from simply outlining scholarship by instead discussing and critiquing the core themes regarding Bronze Age Aegean-

Western Anatolian relations. Greaves' paper is strengthened by his use of information from very recent archaeological investigation and scholarship.

Credit must be given to Eric Cline for bringing these scholars together; as a general rule, the scholarship on display is of an exemplary standard. Unfortunately, the scholars are let down by the poor usability of this volume. One would expect, in a volume of this type, to see a list of illustrations and tables, as well as appendices containing maps and other general background information; all of these are sadly lacking. This poses a significant problem for the reader, as one is unaware of the incredibly useful tables hidden within the pages. Manning, for example, provides a number of extraordinarily useful tables and graphs in both his papers; without standard table lists, these are simply lost within the volume. Furthermore, the index is completely unusable. The term 'destruction' has one-hundred-and-twenty-two references, while 'Mycenae' has one-hundred-and-four and 'Mycenaeen' an unwieldy two-hundred-and-forty-six. 'Mycenaeen civilisation', on the other hand, has only fourteen. No attempt is made to differentiate between main articles and passing references, rendering it very intimidating for students. Finally, there is very little cross-referencing between the papers and the reader is not directed to related information contained elsewhere.

In conclusion, the papers included in the volume certainly fulfil Cline's aim of providing manageable and concise information on every facet of the Bronze Age Aegean. However, regarding the goal of being the definitive handbook and an 'essential research tool' (p.xxxiii) that can be easily used by Undergraduates, it is not as successful.