

GENERAL DISCUSSION

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We have enjoyed a highly successful and most hospitable conference, with 21 papers and a memorable lecture from Professor Felten on the full history and culture of Aegina. We all offer our warmest thanks to our organizers, Professor Felten himself, Dr. Walter Gauss and Dr. Rudolfine Smetana, as well as to the brilliantly efficient members of the SCIEEM 2000 team. For this general discussion we find ourselves in the unusual position of having a chairman considerably less qualified in most of the areas we are discussing than each of you is, but one who can at least offer a – more or less – neutral standpoint.

Perhaps the most interesting theme to have emerged for the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) of the Aegean is regionalism. But how is regionalism to be defined or understood? Definition is likely to encompass different scales, from macro- to microregions, even, with Jerry Rutter, to the individual site and its territory. A region is also likely to have distinct forms – geographical, political, economic, societal, centripetal religious sites, assemblages of closely similar material culture (cf. G. Childe) or burial customs. A directly related and equally important matter is boundaries and the question of equifinality: there is no *a priori* reason for the boundaries of the different kinds of region just enumerated to be coterminous. May any of these different regional dimensions have been operational in the Aegean MBA? Boeotia, for example, was argued to be the core area for Grey Minyan pottery in its fullest morphological and typological range (i.e., closely similar material culture), but was it a region in any of the other forms? Could tumulus burials define a region in any sense compatible with the other forms? How widespread was the social phenomenon, and the implied social structures, of so-called feasting assemblages?

If regions may be definable in any of the forms stated, or any combination of them, are we not thereby enabled to look more effectively at interactions with places outside a “region”? This promotes further questions. Which were the major *exporting*

centers? Aegina, Kea, Seraglio (Kos) and a Thesalian center for the Magnesia polychrome class (J. Maran) seem obvious, but were there others and what was the diachronicity of their exporting power? Trade relations seem to have been complex and often asymmetrical – that is, with no visible surviving imports to balance the scale of exports. Unless exports now invisible provided a balance, how is the asymmetry to be explained? The economic power of even a major center such as Aegina would presumably have wanted something in exchange for its magnificent fine decorated pottery or its functionally top-of-the-range cooking pots. Sometimes what was sought in return can be guessed at with a degree of plausibility. The still to me quite extraordinary phenomenon of some kind of Minoan administrative system in place at MBA Mikro Vouni, Samothrace (D. Matsas)¹ is reasonably explicable as part of an organized search or even established route for metals, as too may have been the case behind a degree of Minoan presence at Çesme (V. Şahoğlu) and Miletos on the west Anatolian coast, though perhaps not before Late Bronze I at the former site.

If we move beyond exports in the economic sense, does not the obvious appreciation of Aeginetan matt-painted ware at many mainland sites suggest export of social and symbolic capital also? And does not selective acquisition of goods from outside a region create status and power differentials among the local recipients, as perhaps is seen in the grave goods of the Messenian tumuli at Ellenika (Kastroulia) or the most unusual and “special” Middle Minoan (MM) IIB or IIIA polychrome jug in the Troy V cist grave?

Beyond acquisition of “foreign” goods is a phenomenon even more interesting, and widespread in the Aegean MBA, namely, if not too hideously, “izings”, local imitation (i.e., local production) and modification – for example, Minoanizing and Minyanizing pottery, at numerous places. The production of southeast Aegean white-on-dark-on-buff ware seems so loosely connected to Minoan proto-

¹ Unfortunately it was not possible to get the paper of Dimitris Matsas on time.

types as to be beyond an “izing” and virtually independent. This phenomenon cries out for comment.

There are also two more down-to-earth matters requiring further discussion in the first case, and at least brief summary in the second, namely, precise synchronisms and first appearances, to enable secure linkages for relative chronology from region to region, and, second, absolute chronology. One example, among many, of a synchronism is the MM jug in Troy V just mentioned. For absolute chronology we have the relevant MBA radiocarbon dates from Troy and Mikro Vouni, Samothrace, rather high in relation to the chronology derived from Minoan cross-links to

Cyprus and Egypt, *if* the radiocarbon dates are taken at face value.

There is, then, abundant material here, arising directly from the conference papers, to promote expansion of the already intensive discussions held after each paper.

N.B.

speakers mentioned in this summary:

J.B. Rutter (35–44 in this volume)

J. Maran (167–182 in this volume)

D. Matsas (paper not included in this volume)

V. Şahoğlu (309–322 in this volume)