



Late Helladic Simple Graves. A Study of Mycenaean Burial Customs by Kazimierz Lewartowski
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Cloth with narrow patterned stripes of this sort has its closest parallels in the Bronze Age Eurasian steppes and on the Hittite warrior's kilt on the King's Gate, Boghazköy (the only detailed representation of cloth we currently have in Hittite art). The designs on these particular stripes are very like those appearing suddenly on LM IIIA (and later) pottery at Knossos, and are similar to later cloth bands preserved at Lefkandi (Euboea) and in Tomb 3 at Charchen (Tarim Basin) (E.J.W. Barber, "Minoan Women and the Challenges of Weaving," in R. Laffineur and P. Betancourt, eds., *TEXNH* [Liege 1997] 515–9, pls. CXCH–CXCH). Paneled pointy kilts recur on Egyptian renditions of Hittites, and slightly later as overskirts on tunicked Syrians. The geometric overall patterns are so typical of patterned weaving worldwide as to be unlocalized (except to exclude Egypt, where such weaving was not done). In short, only one kilt appears to be truly Minoan, differing in both wrap and cloth pattern from the rest; the others seem to have their ultimate origins in Eurasian (steppe) and Near Eastern (Hittite, maybe Syrian) manufacture. Thus the *cloth* suggests an embassy from a cultural melting pot that included Minoans, though not from an isolated enclave thereof.

So what happens to Duhoux's hypothesis of Minoans in the Delta? In this case, it merely got nudged around for a better fit: Duhoux himself suggests that the Minoans were one of several ethnic groups taking refuge in the Nile swamps (217–23) under circumstances where one might expect ever-changing coalitions and mixtures. The bottom line is that exhaustive marshaling of evidence—Duhoux's forte—is never in vain because it helps us all see more clearly where we stand.

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LATE HELLADIC SIMPLE GRAVES. A STUDY OF MYCENAEAN BURIAL CUSTOMS, by *Kazimierz Lewartowski*. (BAR-IS 878.) Pp. vi + 140, fig. 1, tables 44, maps 5. Archaeopress, Oxford 2000. £28. ISBN 1-84171-079-2 (paper).

I wonder how many times I have told introductory classes in Greek archaeology that single burials were exceedingly rare during the Late Helladic period in the Greek mainland. It is certainly true that the common practice of single burial in cist or pit graves during the Middle Helladic period was largely supplanted by communal forms of burial, such as chamber tombs, tholoi, and shaft graves, but after reading Lewartowski's book, I now know better than to claim that the earlier forms essentially disappeared. This book treats a topic that has received little attention, and it will certainly serve as the basic reference for the foreseeable future. Lewartowski

makes an important point about the desirability of studying these humble graves that goes beyond their simple existence as a large set of archaeological data. Simple graves, intended for a single use and so not to be re-opened, are more likely than the larger, communal tombs to have escaped the attention of looters, both ancient and modern, so preserving not only the graves' contents but also the original orientation and posture of the bodies, placement of grave goods, and other evidence related to actual funerary rites. Although the book has some rough edges, it is, nevertheless, an important and thoughtful work of scholarship, one that anyone interested in Mycenaean burial practice will wish to consult.

By "simple graves," the author means nonmonumental tomb or burial types intended primarily for the interment of single individuals. Besides tomb types obviously connected with multiple burials, such as tholoi and chamber tombs, Lewartowski also excludes large shaft graves, tumuli, and grave circles. The book catalogues over 1,200 instances of "simple" burials. Although the author has cast his net widely and includes such rarities as burials in caves or wells, most of his examples belong to the familiar categories of cists and pit graves, the use of which continued throughout the Late Helladic period. The total number of instances is less impressive than it first appears, since 448 of his examples belong to the Sub-Mycenaean period, when single inhumations in pits or cists were the norm. Over 250 examples belong to an earlier period of Mycenaean civilization, when arguably the transition to communal burial was taking place. The graves are divided chronologically into four general "Mycenaean" periods: Early (=Late MH–LH IIB/IIIA1), High (=LH IIIA1–IIIB), Final (=LH IIIC), and Sub-Mycenaean. Given the scarcity of closely datable artifacts in some of the graves, longer chronological groups make sense, but it would be interesting to see whether the Early Mycenaean group could be broken down into a late MH/LH I group and an LH II group. This would help distinguish early graves following the MH tradition from those that were made in LH II, when the communal tomb forms were a well-established alternative.

The book consists of four short chapters; the presentation is logical and organized. The first chapter presents the graves themselves, discussing the individual types, typical construction, and any notable variability within a type. The second chapter analyzes the deceased, concentrating on issues of intramural vs. extramural burials, burial posture, body orientation, and correlations between sex and age vs. grave type. The third chapter, the longest, discusses grave goods and correlations between grave type and the deceased. Especially welcome in all of these chapters is Lewartowski's attention to different regional practices. In the synthetic concluding chapter, the author attempts to reconstruct Mycenaean funerary practice from death through mourning after the grave was closed.

To accompany and support his analyses, Lewartowski has provided over 50 tables and diagrams presenting various aspects of his data. Although several of these are difficult to interpret, future researchers should find them highly useful not only for answering questions about simple graves but also for approaching the analysis of the

communal grave types. Some especially interesting tables correlate different pottery shapes found in the same tomb, as well as different kinds of grave goods in the same tomb. Some of the analyses could use more explanation and defense: it is certainly debatable, for example, whether discriminant analysis based on grave goods can be usefully applied to discern age and sex where forensic examination has not been performed or is inconclusive. The author takes note of the controversy but provides no explanation of the basic issues for those unfamiliar with statistics. More discussion of the concept of the "social status index" would be beneficial as well.

Some of the book's conclusions are both surprising and compelling. One is that the status of some individuals buried in "simple" graves seems to be fully as high or higher than those buried in nearby chamber tombs, at least if grave goods are a reliable indicator. In fact, according to Lewartowski, similarities between the burials in chamber tombs and those in simple graves are much more apparent than their differences. This suggests that obvious explanations for simple graves based on their owners being slaves or members of a lower class are inadequate. A second interesting observation is the real lack of "rules" governing many aspects of burial practice, including uniform sets of grave offerings. Lewartowski makes a strong case that individual preferences rather than social rules governed the actual funerary ceremony and particular features and contents of the grave. A third observation concerns the distinctive vessels and a few other items that frequently accompany children's burials.

A catalogue of simple graves, broken down by region and site, follows the main text. Its entries are highly abbreviated but generally comprehensible once the basic pattern is understood. Each entry includes such information as is available concerning grave type, dimensions, date, burial posture, and grave goods, as well as a bibliography. The catalogue alone makes the book a necessary purchase for research libraries. The bibliography is full and current within a couple of years of the publication date.

The *British Archaeological Reports-International Series* generally publishes manuscripts in a state more or less as submitted by their authors. The author, not a native writer of English as he states in the introduction, is almost always comprehensible, but the book has some problems with syntax and spelling that occasionally make for difficulties in reading it. For a volume that is likely to be an important reference, it is a pity that a proofreader could not have spent a day or so correcting the obvious problems. If a second edition appears, one hopes that the text will be corrected. Similarly, the tables themselves are sometimes difficult to use because the captions and cell labels are sometimes not clear; particularly disconcerting at first are some of the tables involving percentages, since neither columns nor rows add to 100%; it requires some thumbing through the text to discern how they were generated. Also, given modern typesetting technology, there is no reason to keep in the tables the telegraphic (and often cryptic) eight-character variable abbreviations that the older statistics programs required.

Fuller labels on the rows and columns would alleviate much of the need to refer constantly to the separate tables that explain the abbreviations.

The prospective reader should not, however, be put off by the criticisms made here. Lewartowski's diligence, rigor, and highly analytical approach shine through. He has made an important contribution to the study of Mycenaean funerary practice.

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AFFAIRS AND SCANDALS IN ANCIENT EGYPT, by Pascal Vernus (translated by D. Lorton.) Pp. x + 211, figs. 44, maps 2. Cornell University Press, Ithaca/London 2004. \$29.95. ISBN 0-8014-4078-5 (cloth).

From the perspective of a present-day reader, the later New Kingdom can seem to be one of the most exciting periods of Egyptian history. Within the nearly 200-year period of ca. 1200-1070 B.C.E., not only do we have the complex political transitions from the final kings of the 19th Dynasty to those of the 20th and the even more dramatic shift to the 21st, but we also have an extensive (if selective) wealth of documentation of the activities of the wider population, ranging from important (if not particularly exciting) tax records like Papyrus Wilbour to the much more lively attestations of daily life at the workers' village of Deir el Medina. This period is also punctuated by a series of public "scandals" documented in indictments, trial records, and similar legal documents that form the subject of the book under review. It would be absurd to consider these incidents as "neglected" by scholars, but before the publication of the original French edition of this book in 1993, there was no handy overview and analysis of these ancient causes célèbres. The present volume brings this useful study to an Anglophone audience.

Affairs and Scandals in Ancient Egypt is not simply a retelling of ancient scandals. It is a thoughtful and complex analysis of events and a detailed examination of why they were able to take place, and how they relate to larger shifts in values in Egyptian society. This book is that rarest of products of scholarly publishing: an entertaining and accessible monograph by an important scholar that can be appreciated by a nonscholarly audience and that will prove useful and thought provoking to specialist readers. While the title might lead the casual Anglophone reader to expect racy tales of sexual exploits, the volume is in fact more concerned with the wider range of activity covered more accurately by the original French *Affaires et scandales* than the English calque. These are events on a large scale; scandalous activities that involved groups of people and had wider political and religious ramifications.