l’identificazione di un tulku, un essere divino che per compassione dell’umanità ha preso una forma umana. Siccome in questo contesto le reincarnazioni sono sempre multiple e mai uniche, questa corrispondenza conferma, contro la communis opinio, anche la bontà della tradizione che attribuisce a Pitagora più reincarnazioni e non una sola.

In questo affresco di ampio respiro K. rimanda anche ad un possibile collegamento fra le culture dell’Asia centrale e quelle delle tribù indigene del Canada e del Nord-America dove sono ancora individuabili il simbolismo della freccia e la credenza nella reincarnazione con relative pratiche di riconoscimento.

Le considerazioni generali sulla nascita e il tramonto delle culture riassumono in poche parole le ragioni della profonda crisi, anche culturale, che affligge il mondo occidentale. Secondo K. le culture nascono in una determinata area e in un certo tempo per opera di personaggi che hanno uno speciale contatto col divino e per uno scopo sacro. Nel momento in cui quest’ultimo viene dimenticato e ridotto alla dimensione egotistica di una particolare civiltà, quando si perde il senso della totalità che sta dietro al singolo fenomeno e della immobilità sottesa ad un presunto progresso, le culture cominciano a disgregarsi. Per filologi e storici della filosofia mi sembra un buon punto di partenza per cominciare a riflettere sull’origine, il senso e i fini della civiltà occidentale.

Zürich

M. Laura Gemelli Marciano


In this nineteenth in the impressive series of volumes co-edited by Manfred Bietak and Hermann Hunger as ‘Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean’, all published since 2000 and for the most part in English despite the Austrian nationality of the editors and their staff and the Viennese home of the publisher, Tobias Mühlenbruch presents the evidence for Aegean-Levantine synchronisms in the form of Mycenaean ceramic imports and locally produced imitations thereof at 5 sites in Cilicia and a further 20 sites in the northern Levant (defined here as the Amuq in southeastern Turkey, coastal as well as inland western Syria, and Lebanon). Following a brief Introduction (13–14) and equally short chapters on the History of Research (15–17) and the State of the Evidence (‘Quellenlage’: 19–20), a somewhat lengthier section on Methodology (21–24) pre-

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1 L’istituzione tibetana del tulku avrebbe però le sue radici profonde, prima ancora che nel buddismo, nella tradizione regale indigena pre-buddista dove il re è una epifania dell’antenato celeste che si rinnova continuamente nel successore. Il re veniva infatti (ritualmente?) ucciso quando il figlio raggiungeva i 13 anni per permettere alla sua potenza numinosa di ‘entrare’ in lui e di rigenerarsi. Cf. l’articolata discussione, le relative analisi linguistiche e l’estesa bibliografia a p. 136-143 n. 24.

2 Discussione di questo punto con relativa bibliografia a p. 124-126 n. 23.

3 P. 143-147 n. 25.
cedes the heart of the study entitled Comparative Stratigraphy (25–88), a site-by-site listing of the typological identifications, contexts of discovery, decorations, states of preservation, dimensions, and dates of the Mycenaean vessels, whether whole or fragmentary, that come from well-documented excavation loci at their respective Levantine findspots. The two succeeding chapters consider 'Trade Between Southern Greece and the Northern Levant (89–108) and the Late Bronze Age Significance of Imports (109–149). A short concluding chapter (151–154) succinctly restates the study’s contents and findings. A final one-page chart (155) presents a schematic comparative stratigraphy of the nine sites that have thus far provided the bulk of the Mycenaean ceramic evidence surveyed, the chart being limited to those strata that contain such imports. The volume concludes with an extensive Bibliography (157–174) containing titles up through 2007 as well as a very few from 2008, but lacks an index or a list of illustrations. The latter include a couple of maps of the Levantine region (Abb. 1–2) derived from van Wijngaarden 2002, a series of 35 tables presenting the ceramic data here taken into consideration, and 16 assorted and for the most part only partial site plans (Abb. 3–18) drawn largely from preliminary reports that seek to illustrate, with variable degrees of success (see below), the findspots of Mycenaean pottery in four categories of context (settlement, cultic, palatial, funerary) singled out for special consideration.

To put Mühlenbruch’s contribution to our overall understanding of Aegean interactions with Cilicia and the northern Levant into sharper perspective, a simple comparison of his coverage with other surveys of Mycenaean pottery recovered from the same regions compiled by A. Leonard (1994) and G. van Wijngaarden (2002) is instructive. Of Mühlenbruch’s 25 sites, all but three in Cilicia (Soli, Sirkeli Hüyük, and Kinet Hüyük) and two in Syria (Tell Afis, Tell Djinderis) are listed in van Wijngaarden’s catalogue of sites (2002: 323–329), but only 11 appear in Leonard’s site index (1994: 201–211). More significantly, of the 429 Mycenaean vessels itemized in Mühlenbruch’s 35 tables, less than a third (142) appear in Leonard’s volume. From Ras Shamra/Ugarit, the single site covered in equivalent detail by Mühlenbruch and van Wijngaarden, the latter included just 41 of the 75 pieces cited by Mühlenbruch as having been published from reliable contexts. This site is, of course, notorious for the enormous quantities of Mycenaean pottery found there (554 vessels listed by van Wijngaarden [2002: 310–340] plus more than 400 additional pieces in the Louvre recently published by Hirschfeld [2000a, b]), the vast majority of which lack any specific contextual information. Mühlenbruch’s addition of copious new data from the sites of Tell Afis and Tell Kazel in particular, but also from Kilise Tepe and Kamid el-Loz, represents a significant increase in the evidence now available with respect to both the chronology and the cultural contexts from which Mycenaean ceramic imports in the Levant are documented.

Unfortunately, Mühlenbruch has omitted any drawings of the pottery he discusses on the grounds that most of the pieces in question have already been illustrated in readily accessible publications (14). While this is no doubt true, the fact remains that such images are spread across well in excess of twenty different publications that can only be consulted at one and the same time in a comparatively small number of research libraries. Assembling a collection of the relevant images and posting them on a single dedicated Web site might have been a helpful as well as less costly alternative to full republication.
Despite the book’s title and the catalogue-like format of its principal chapter, consisting of little more than the listing, with basic identifications, datings, and contextual citations, of the 429 pieces considered worthy of inclusion for the purposes of constructing a valid comparative stratigraphy (25–88 plus chart on 155), the bulk of the text is devoted not so much to chronological concerns as to questions involving the historical development of the trade in Mycenaean pottery with particular regions of the northeastern Mediterranean and with the variability in how such imports were consumed at their ultimate Levantine findspots. For his identifications and especially dating of Mycenaean pottery, Mühlenbruch appropriately acknowledges his debt to the works of E. French, K. Wardle, P. Mountjoy, C. Podzuweit, and R. Jung, while for his categorization of contexts he relies upon distinctions made by R. Hachmann at Kamid el-Loz. He makes no attempt to distinguish Minoan pieces among the painted Aegean imports, on the grounds that too few Minoan settlement sequences spanning the 14th–12th centuries have been published to allow the necessary discrimination between regional products either within Crete or within major regions of the Mycenaean mainland outside of the Argolid. While this may certainly have been true as little as five years ago, the recent spate of Late Minoan III settlement sequences published from sites such as Chania, Knossos, Kommos, Mochlos, and Palaikastro in tandem with the comprehensive overview of LM II–IIIB Crete by Langohr (2009) will henceforth render such an excuse no longer viable, at least as far as Crete is concerned.

Mühlenbruch was regrettably able to examine by direct autopsy only a small percentage of the 429 pieces selected for inclusion in his study (12). He therefore omits in his tabular presentation format any commentary on the colors and consistencies of the vessels’ clay fabrics or the nature of their surface treatments and paints, and thus must rely purely on typological criteria of shape and décor to suggest which pieces are to be identified as mainland Greek imports, products of other Aegean regions, or Cypriot and even local Levantine imitations. In the present state of our knowledge, only some 75 pieces of ‘Mycenaean’ pottery from Tell Kazel (57, Tables 22–23: Badre, Boileau, Jung, and Mommsen 2005), another half-dozen from Kilise Tepe (25 and note 90, Table 2: Tomlinson 2007), and four from Tell Dijinderis (Mühlenbruch, Sterba, and Sürenhagen 2009) have so far been subjected to analysis by neutron activation, in addition to smaller numbers from Kazel also by petrography. Although somewhat more than half of the chemically analyzed pieces from Kazel turned out to come from the Argolid, the remainder have been shown to represent a small number of different production centers sprinkled throughout the Aegean (including the west coast of Anatolia) and plausibly also regions further to the east (e.g. Cyprus and the Levant) (23 and note 76). The extent to which these findings apply to different stages in the history of Mycenaean pottery’s importation to the Levant or to distinct regions and even sites within it remains to be established. But as Mühlenbruch repeatedly emphasizes (e.g. 144 and note 1222), the consumption of these vessels and the local production of imitations are likely to have been highly variable within the area he is surveying, especially from late in the Late Helladic (LH) IIIB period (ca. 1250 BC) onwards.

It is impossible to do justice here to Mühlenbruch’s wide-ranging discussion of the trade in Mycenaean and what he calls ‘Mycenaeanized’ (23 note 77) ceramics within the broader context of Aegean-Levantine exchanges throughout the Late
Bronze Age. Suffice it to say that his isolation of three principal stages in this trade that correspond roughly with the pre-palatial (LH I–IIB), palatial (LH IIIA1–IIIB2), and post-palatial (LH IIIC) phases of socio-economic development on the Greek mainland conforms with the views of most specialists. Comprehensively few imports and effectively no imitations characterize the initial stage. Massive numbers of imports deriving especially from Argive production centers along with a sparing number of local imitations are typical of the second. The final stage witnesses a major decline in Argive products beginning already before the end of the second stage, a corresponding rise in the number of Cypriot imitations, and above all a dramatic increase in the percentage of local imitations. It is for this last stage that the comparatively new data from sites like Tell Afis, Tell Kazel, and Kilise Tepe (and eventually also from Tell Tayinat when those are more fully published) will have the greatest impact on changing current reconstructions of Aegean-Levantine interaction during the period ca. 1250–1050 BC.

Mühlenbruch’s study has not fared well in the final editorial process. Aside from a significant number of minor typographical errors sprinkled throughout the text and the frequent verbatim repetition of footnotes when cross-references would have been more appropriate, some plans function poorly as supplements to the text (e.g. Abb. 8, incompletely labeled as showing only Building II at Tell Kazel, and therefore useless for an understanding of Building I, described in considerable detail on 123–124). Much of the lengthy chapter on imports’ significance consisting almost exclusively of room inventories (115–143) could surely have been more usefully presented in the form of tables. Such imperfections notwithstanding, this volume constitutes a helpful compilation of basic information accompanied by a provocative discussion of the history of trade in a commodity that is ubiquitous throughout the coastal regions of the northern Levant, as well as much of the interior within 100 km of the sea, for over three centuries. Most importantly, it succeeds admirably in drawing attention to a host of analytical as well as theoretical issues on which more work is needed.

Hanover, New Hampshire

Jeremy B. Rutter