Review
Reviewed Work(s): Art and Identity in Dark Age Greece, 1100-700 B.C.E. by Susan Langdon
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including the large platform mound of Monte d'Accoddi, which was clearly a ritual center, and one of such capacity that considerable human resources must have been involved in its construction.

For the subsequent Chalcolithic period and Early Bronze Age, Dyson and Rowland support up-to-date interpretations that there was increasing social tension and development of hierarchical social structures within Sardinian society (which included the circulation of prestige goods), rather than migration from and ethnic association with mainland Italy. However, the mention of some Beaker-period ceramic finds at the otherwise Neolithic site of Filiestru, and with Ozieri (Late Neolithic) grave goods in rock-cut tombs, could have been dealt with more critically in terms of chronology, especially given the reuse of such sites for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. It's important that the authors note that while these overall archaeological features indicate that a native Sardinian elite emerged, individual or high-status burials were rare.

By the end of the Bonnanaro phase (ca. 1700 B.C.E.), the creation of stone dwellings known as *nuraghi* had begun. The earliest proto- or pseudo-*nuraghi* are raised stone platforms with corridors or galleries and staircases inside, while most of the 7,000-plus *nuraghi* known are the more common tholos type. Dyson and Rowland delve into much greater depth about these corbel-vaulted, often multistoried dwellings, which make Sardinia stand out compared with other areas of the Mediterranean. They discuss the floral and faunal remains, diets and agricultural activities, and variations in settlement areas based on landscape and environmental factors. Much of chapter 4 addresses Nuragic social organization, especially of complex, multitowered Nuragic villages such as Su Nuraxi-Barumini, as well as of clusters of a dozen or more *nuraghi* within kilometers of one another. It also deals with the many Nuragic-period villages that have been found without an associated tower, the general interpretation of bellicosity as characteristic of the Nuragic period, and the circular meeting room (*casa di riunione*) found in Nuragic villages, with bench seating along the inner wall and a model *nuraghe* in the center. The actual sociopolitical organization of the Nuragic people, however, is dealt with only superficially.

In chapter 5, the authors cover, in detail, the findings of copper oxhide ingots and Mycenaean ceramics in Sardinia and their implications for connections with the Aegean world, the clearly indigenous *bronzetti* warriors and other figurines, the so-called giants' tombs (*tomba dei giganti*) and their mortuary implications, well-temples (*pozzi di sacri*) and other water cult structures, and less common or unique finds such as the 25 over-life-sized human stone sculptures found at the Monte Prama funerary complex. All of these are treated in substantial detail and in reference to up-to-date interpretations and theories by Sardinian as well as European and American scholars. While Dyson and Rowland also make it clear that these interactions were multidirectional—with Nuragic pottery found in the Aeolian islands and on Crete—they accept that at most, only small numbers of Nuragic people were involved with the Sea Peoples recorded as invading Egypt during the New Kingdom; but they do not address at all the issue of whether the name of that tribe (Sherden) is related to the name of the island (Sardinia).

With the Phoenicians in the Iron Age came the earliest foreign settlements on the island, and their impact on the native culture is dealt with in some detail. Dyson and Rowland suggest that it was a relatively peaceful interaction, with native materials appearing in Phoenician graves and tophets and Euboean and other ceramics found at Nuragic sites. They also do an excellent job presenting and discussing the archaeological evidence in settlement and burial contexts (as well as providing historical background) and in addressing the Punic impact on native culture, which continues quite strongly at Nuragic sites and in cult practices. For the Republican and Imperial Roman periods, the authors continue with a great meshing of different data sources, including historic records (e.g., Livy, but also Cicero and Pliny), which indicate that Sardinia was a major grain source. Products such as wool, cheese, silver, lead, and iron were also exported. The authors discuss in detail the changes (or lack thereof) in both urban and hinterland localities, including the continuation of Punic mortuary practices, with only a slow change from inhumation to cremation burials. Dyson and Rowland make it clear that in Sardinia there was minimal urbanization beyond the coastal zones, with few Roman villas and other new sites in contrast to other areas of Roman occupation.

For later Roman times, Dyson and Rowland continue to incorporate, with archaeological evidence, the increased documentary and literary information about political and economic issues and religious practices. Once again, they emphasize that there was continuity of native lifeways, especially in rural areas, with Vandal and Byzantine impact mainly along the coast. For medieval Sardinia, the authors provide an excellent synthesis of the historical information about Arab raids, religious struggles between Byzantium and Rome, and the emergence of four autonomous judicates by the late ninth century C.E. They also discuss the impact of Byzantine and subsequent Pisan, Genoan, and Catalan powers on Sardinian language and names and provide several pages on the role of women such as Eleonora of Arborea.

Overall, Dyson and Rowland have done an excellent job with this book. It is well organized and illustrated, up-to-date in terms of archaeological evidence and theoretical interpretations, easily readable, and appropriate for classroom use as well as for anyone interested in the ancient Mediterranean. The publication is physically strong, too, and reasonably priced, though better proofreading could have been done.

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## ART AND IDENTITY IN DARK AGE GREECE, 1100–700 B.C.E., by *Susan Langdon*. Pp. xviii + 388, figs. 119, tables 4. Cambridge University Press, New York 2008. $90. ISBN 978-0-521-51321-0 (cloth).

It has been a long time since a book has made such a strong impression on me as Langdon's *Art and Identity in Dark Age Greece, 1100–700 B.C.E.* At the very beginning, I was drawn in by the eloquence and beauty of the writing. Langdon does not shy away from offering an intriguing—sometimes daring—interpretation of how geometric art functioned in the formation and articulation of gender and social identities.

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Langdon questions why geometric ceramics so often show scenes of warriors and young women, sometimes separate and sometimes together or juxtaposed. Numerous examples demonstrate that geometric art exhibits an increasing desire to illustrate the development, qualities, and actions of young women on the verge of marriage and their male counterparts, the warrior heroes. Gender is a main topic of the book—specifically, gender within the context of changing communities. Langdon shows how, within the transitioning societies in the Geometric period, people could use figural art to communicate correct gendered behavior, especially as marriage alliances and kinship ties became key concerns of elite families.

Langdon invites the reader to look at geometric art in an intensive and detailed way. She employs a simple, effective method of organization. She starts each chapter with a discussion of one carefully chosen ceramic vessel. In the rest of the chapter, she connects the imagery of that particular vessel to broader trends. Often the chosen vessels are ones that many scholars will already find familiar, yet she calls attention to specific details and comparisons that make one look at the figural decoration anew. One of the enjoyable elements of this book is Langdon's ability to make readers notice aspects of geometric art that they had seen before but perhaps had never questioned deeply, such as the lines of maidens, their dresses, and hairstyles.

Certainly the strongest contribution is chapter 3 ("Virgin Territory: The Construction of the Maiden"), which contains an analysis of the rows of women on geometric vessels, interpreted as maiden dancers. Langdon describes and catalogues the maiden dancers, creating charts showing what the women hold, what they wear, and which other figures occur with them. She then turns to other sources of evidence to add to her explanation of both the meaning and popularity of these female dancers. Although Homer and Hesiod play a role, they do not dominate the interpretation. Instead, Langdon draws on evidence such as burials, documenting the unusual concentration of wealthy burials of young women from this period—fascinating evidence that I have not previously seen discussed. She also incorporates evidence from other sources such as religious sites, metal artwork, and Phoenician pieces that may have provided inspiration. She concludes that the rows of maiden dancers on ceramics show the importance of daughters, attempting to highlight their positive attributes and virginity, which would have increased their value for families using them in marriage alliances.

By contrast, the weakest chapter is chapter 2 ("Geometric Art Comes of Age: An Archaeology of Maturation"), which examines Amazons, centaurs, and Gorgons in geometric art. Although Langdon attempts to relate these figures and scenes to maturation rituals for boys or young men, the argument fails to convince and relies too heavily on mythic tradition or on limited pieces of evidence. Instead, chapter 5 ("The Domestication of the Warrior") is a much better discussion of the male figures in geometric art.

This is not a book for the beginner, for Langdon assumes that the reader already has a fairly extensive background in the major scholarship on the Geometric period. In regard to the political, artistic, and social developments in this period, she builds on research by Snodgrass (*The Dark Age of Greece: An Archaeological Survey of the Eleventh to the Eighth Centuries BC* [Edinburgh 1971]), Coldstream (*Geometric Greece* [London 1977]; *Greek Geometric Pottery: A Survey of Ten Local Styles and Their Chronology* [London 1968]), Whitley (*Style and Society in Dark Age Greece: The Changing Face of a Preliterate Society 1100–700 BC* [Cambridge 1991]), and Morris (*Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City-State* [Cambridge 1987]). She also uses research on ritual and sanctuaries, as well as Homeric scholarship. Those studying the Geometric period, but also gender, myth, art, and epic, will find this book intellectually stimulating. It will have a lasting impact on the direction of Geometric- as well as Archaic-period studies and will serve as a model for writing and research excellence.

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## Fragments of Archaic Crete: Archaeological Studies on Time and Space, by *Lena Sjögren* (*Boreas* 31). Pp. 258, figs. 23, plans 11, maps 4. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala 2008. Price not available. ISBN 978-91-554-7373-0 (paper).

Cretan archaeologists have traditionally focused on the Bronze Age. Post-Minoan history and archaeology have received nowhere near the same attention, although there are encouraging signs of a growing interest in the historical periods of the island. Sjögren's book on archaic Crete is part of a larger effort to reclaim these once marginalized periods. In addition to publications of sites and surveys with substantial post–Bronze Age components, the past few years have seen conferences devoted to archaic topics, as well as several synthetic works, including Prent's *Cretan Sanctuaries and Cults: Continuity and Change from Late Minoan IIIC to the Archaic Period* (Leiden 2005) and Sjögren's own *Cretan Locations: Discerning Site Variations in Iron Age and Archaic Crete (800–500 B.C.)* (Oxford 2003). Her new book builds on that earlier study but has a different orientation that stresses the subjective nature of archaeological reconstruction. She takes bold stands on controversial issues and presents a clear vision of the way forward for Cretan archaeology.

The first half of the volume (chs. 1–4) presents a critique of archaeological research on Crete. Sjögren is less concerned with the historical and institutional factors that shaped archaeological disciplines than with holding recent scholarship up to a postprocessualist lens. She argues that there has been an emphasis on pottery chronologies as a supposedly objective measure of time but little consideration of how ancient communities perceived time and their own past (52–5, 72). Sjögren also criticizes previous architectural studies for narrowly focusing on the form and function of building types rather than spatial relationships and their social implications (75–88). Almost no one working on the island in the last two decades emerges unscathed—Sjögren even critiques her own previous work (12, 78, 89). Yet this uncompromisingly postprocessualist vision (inspired by the reaction of Shanks and Tilley in the 1990s to the positivist tradition) is a rhetorical strategy that presents its own problems. For example, the author intentionally avoids maps and plans because they betray modern

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