

development of monasticism. His analysis of Messalianism is particularly noteworthy, and will stimulate discussion for years to come. This is an important book and I would not hesitate to recommend it wholeheartedly.

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THE AEGEAN, 1100–900 B.C.

I. S. LEMOS: *The Protogeometric Aegean. The Archaeology of the Late Eleventh and Tenth Centuries BC* (Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology). Pp. xxiv + 245, ill., maps, pls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Cased, £110. ISBN: 0-19-925344-7.

This book gives an up-to-date, concise account of the archaeology of the Aegean area—the title is carefully chosen, as we shall see—in the period described in its sub-title. Lemos argues, rightly, that the profusion of new discoveries justifies a fresh attempt to bring this material together. The first two chapters, accounting for nearly half the main text (pp. 1–100), are devoted to the largely pottery-based chronology of these years, and to the pottery itself. Chapters 3–5 deal more briefly with metalwork, arranged typologically; and with settlements, sanctuaries, and burial practices, arranged by region. The last chapter offers an unusually full and discursive set of Conclusions, and there are three invaluable appendices, listing respectively Near Eastern imports to the Aegean, Aegean exports to the Near East, and a register of the Aegean sites. The sequence of main topics and the organization of the sub-sections often recalls that of the late Vincent Desborough's works of 1952, 1964, and 1972; like Desborough, L. excels in handling the niceties of ceramic development.

Rather surprisingly, L. claims in the opening sentence of the book that 'It is a long time since the archaeology of the Aegean in the period between the collapse of the Mycenaean palace system and the formation of Early Greek towns has been thought an appropriate subject for detailed study'. But 'detailed study', of numerous aspects of this era, is surely exactly what the period has had during the past thirty years: what is needed today is, rather, an up-to-date synthesis to replace those of the late 1960s and early 1970s. How far does L.'s book fill this need? For all its undoubted value and first-hand expertise, two factors act to limit its utility.

First, there are the geographical exclusions. The main ones are honestly announced on the first page. 'Western Greece'—that is, the western Greek mainland—is not included, because of its slower recovery from the collapse of the palace system, and because of the apparently imminent publication of detailed area studies. More seriously, in a work with 'Aegean' in its title, Crete is not covered either, in this case because 'its character . . . is different from most of the rest of the Aegean'. On p. 6, we find that the sites of Kastanas and Assiros in inland central Macedonia are also 'situated outside the main geographical area of the present study', though happily the same does not apply to the recently excavated sites of the Chalkidiki, which feature in several contexts. The unspoken grounds for these decisions are ceramic: these are all regions which did not observe the canonical sequence of pottery-styles in these centuries. And, Crete apart, they are also regions which did not possess an Aegean coastline—hence the studied choice in L.'s title of 'the Aegean'. But these exclusions

do have important effects, to which we shall return, on the central arguments of L.'s thesis.

Secondly and more superficially, there is the other element in the title, 'Protogeometric'. Here again, L. gives a candid statement of her motivation (p. 2) in avoiding some of the likely alternatives. Her case against using any phrase incorporating a 'Dark Age' is an acceptable one: in fact, the 'debate' between the proponents and opponents of that term has become a visibly hollow one, when both sides base their arguments on an identical body of evidence, but with contrasting emphases. Less obvious is the case for avoiding reference to the [Early] Iron Age, especially when, as L. herself states (p. 1), 'An important common practice is . . . the adoption of iron technology'. By comparison, however, 'Protogeometric' almost falls in the category of what the journalist Paul Johnson (*The Enemies of Society*) christened 'bow-wow words . . . noises to discourage trespassers'. In a work by and for classical archaeologists, this is not an objection; but it will hardly encourage historians, Homeric philologists, or even world archaeologists to turn to the book.

The central issue, however, is that of the acceptability of the main theses for which L. argues. These are, roughly, that there was 'substantial interaction among the Protogeometric communities' (p. 1); that 'the exchange of ideas and goods was . . . one of the most influential factors in [their] formation': and that, to judge from the burial evidence, 'they were already developing complex social structures' (pp. 224–5). Thus, not only can the period no longer be considered one of isolation, but it shows palpable advances in the direction of state-formation: Lefkandi in particular was 'a stratified and prosperous society' (p. 219). L. has no difficulty in establishing a case for these propositions, but does not acknowledge that they are in part a product of the geographical limits that she has set to her book. Thus, if the adoption of the Protogeometric style of pottery is in itself proof of interaction and exchange of ideas, to draw that implication for the area in which this style prevailed is no more than a circular argument. An immediate objection is to ask: what about those other areas where the style was adopted only later, or not at all—Lakonia, Messenia, Arcadia, Elis, Achaia, Aitolia, Acarnania, Western Lokris, Epirus, inland Macedonia, Aeolic Anatolia, and, especially, Crete? The chronology set out on pp. 24–6 does not hold for any of them. Not until p. 198 do we get the first of the maps which reveal the geographical selectivity of L.'s treatment. When we turn to external contacts, it is notable that Appendix I (the imports to the Aegean) lists just twelve sites and Appendix II (the exports) only six.

Next, do these regions, excluded on the ceramic criterion, conform in respect of other tests? Metalworking and especially the adoption of iron could be just as strong an indication as pottery, both for interaction and for social complexity; so could changes in architecture or funerary practice. But many of these other regions were no prompter in changing from bronze to iron than they were in embracing the Protogeometric style: here, in her discussion (pp. 101–2) of the bronze/iron transition, L. might have taken account of the possible recycling of older bronze artefacts. Their burial practices were variegated; indeed, even within her restricted area, L. admits (p. 184) to 'a wide variety of rites and practices'. Only in architecture, with the notably wide distribution of the apsidal plan, have we anything approaching a koine of material culture covering the then Greek world; but L. seems unimpressed by this feature (pp. 149–50). The appropriate passage in her Conclusions (pp. 191–3)—an exception to the text as a whole in appearing somewhat illogical and hastily written—omits all mention of it.

This is not, and cannot be, a book about 'Protogeometric Greece', because there was

no such unified chronological or geographical entity. What we have instead is an extremely valuable, detailed survey of the more advanced regions. L.'s many re-interpretations are well and fairly argued. Thus, she is right to extend the geographical spread of Submycenaean, even if the claim that there are settlement deposits of this era at Nea Ionia (Volos) appears thinly supported (at p. 12 n. 73—not at p. 7 n. 46, where we expect it). Her very balanced account of the architectural high-point of the period, the controversial apsidal building at Lefkandi (pp. 140–6), concludes by supporting the interpretation of its excavator (and her own Ph.D. supervisor), the late Mervyn Popham: he deserved no less.

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CYPRIT SEALS AND INSCRIPTIONS

J. S. SMITH: *Script and Seal Use on Cyprus in the Bronze and Iron Ages*. (Archaeological Institute of America, Colloquia and Conference Papers 4.) Pp. xvii + 248, maps, ills. Boston: Archaeological Institute of America, 2002. Paper, US\$35/£29.95. ISBN: 0-9609042-7-1.

Edited by Joanna Smith, this is a collection of six essays that were all given at a colloquium in America except the last by Barry Powell. A preface introduces the papers and allots them into periods.

The first paper, by S., considers problems and prospects in the study of seal use in the Bronze and Iron Ages. It comments that in the Bronze Age scripts were in Egyptian hieroglyphic, cuneiform, and possibly Luwian hieroglyphic, but by far the greatest numbers were in Cypro-Minoan. They were usually cylinders made of haematite or some other material. These were not looked at for their material. In the Iron Age the script is Greek, normally syllabic, and Phoenician. Again, no question of the material of the seals is addressed, but they are generally Cypriot in design. An archaeological approach emphasizes that the context of a seal is vital. Problems and prospects include various considerations. First is the provenance of the object, followed by the preservation. Evidence is forthcoming that the Cypriots wrote on wood, papyrus, parchment, and leather. Sealings scarcely exist except after the Classical period, notwithstanding the Cypriot stamp seals. The problem of reading many Cypriot inscriptions still elude scholars, although many of the Cypro-Syllabic inscriptions read as Greek, but there are a number in Eteo-Cypriot (Petit, *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 12/1 [1999], 108–20). S. then goes on to consider biases of discovery and publication, and finally looks towards integrated studies.

The next paper, by Hirschfield, looks at marks on pots on the site of Enkomi. They are mostly single signs so they give no indication of the value or the meaning of the marks. The four archaeological expeditions found quite a number of vases, though some were lost. Vases are marked in various different ways: isolated single marks that may be incised, painted, or impressed on the handles, shoulders, bases of open and closed, local and imported, fine and coarse, plain and decorated vases. There are in all four different marking systems, but their meanings are not often clear. Apart from the Red Lustrous wheelmade spindle bottles, all are marked after firing so they could have been marked by the Cypriots and could be evidence of trade or the like. About twenty-five carry inscriptions (mostly Cypro-Minoan), usually on plain jars with two or three signs incised into the handle before firing. Red Lustrous wheelmade spindle

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