

## Stratification, Normative Discontinuity and Metaphor: Archaeology of the Middle Ground

Gary S. Webster

*Normative discontinuity is little studied by archaeologists although its importance for understanding diachronic phenomena like social stratification is obvious. Cognitive research provides the ground for a Weberian theory of normative change as the outcome of contestations between competing social myths. These conflicts arise from incongruities between metaphorically-structured conceptualizations of social reality and experienced social reality. To facilitate the archaeological inference of normative change, a typology of generative rules is suggested by which normative concepts might be expressed as substantive metaphors. The methodology is applied to a pilot study of temporal covariation in pottery design imagery within three major ceramic traditions of late Nuragic Sardinia. When 'read' as substantive metaphorical expressions of past social experiences, late Nuragic ceramic imagery suggests a coherent set of normative concepts 'structured' in terms of a central ontological metaphor of the general 'vessel-as-social-landscape' type. Moreover, variations in that material imagery make sense in terms of normative changes conducive to the emergence of class relations.*

Discontinuity . . . the fact that within the space of a few years a culture sometimes ceases to think as it had been thinking up till then and begins to think other things in a new way . . . probably begins with an erosion from outside, from that space which is, for thought, on the other side, but in which it has never ceased to think from the very beginning. (*The Order of Things*, Foucault 1972, 50)

Foucault comments on the significance of normative discontinuity in social and ideological change: the idea that new patterns of conduct are necessarily preceded by the evolution of a collective sense of their ethical possibility, their normative justification and their moral implications. The role of normative discontinuity has been little studied by archaeologists (cf. Knapp 1988; 1996; Morris 2000), although its importance for understanding such major diachronic phenomena as the emergence of social stratification in prehistory would seem obvious. After all, the emergence of stratified from ranked social relations presupposes normative changes conducive to them: the adoption of a whole new set of social

conventions, along with the symbols that situated them ideologically within the sacred realm (cf. Knapp 1988). We must assume, for example, that the entrepreneurial practices implied by even embryonic class relations (cf. Webster 1990; Gilman 1981; 1991) initially constituted normative or moral transgressions — acts deviant within the existing value structure. The eventual ritual legitimation of such conduct rested upon at least a tacit social acceptance of its morality. Given the prevailing ethos of the time, the unthinkable had first to be thought; Foucault's 'other side' brought into the collective conscience, confronted and normalized.

This article explores the archaeological study of normative discontinuity, specifically as it informs the issue of emergent stratification. I am concerned to evaluate Weber's original thesis that 'ideas can be effective forces in history' (1984, 90) and to address the question: how did values and norms conducive to early class conduct emerge within a pre-class society?

The first half of the article discusses a theoretical framework within which normative change might

be studied archaeologically from a socio-cognitive perspective. Knapp (1996, 71) astutely recognized the greatest barrier 'establishing some congruence between mental concepts and social actions, on the one hand, and their material expressions, on the other' (see also Zubrow 1994). The pursuit of these inquiries has led on a course from the relative security of an archaeology of social phenomena to a decidedly more controversial archaeology of the mind (see Zubrow 1994; Hodder 1999). Toward this I offer a methodology for inferring normative values in material expression using a metaphoric logic. The second half of the article reports on preliminary efforts to apply the methodology to normative interpretations of Nuragic ceramic imagery.

### Normative discontinuity: a theoretical framework

#### *Contradiction, normative discontinuity and the middle ground*

Normative discontinuity is relatively new terrain for the archaeologist, but sociological research in the Weberian tradition can provide guidance (cf. Cowgill 1993, 559). In his famous study of the ideological origins of capitalism, Max Weber suggested that it was in the context of growing tensions between social ideals and social reality that the new Protestant ethos arose to 'promote, legitimize and dignify' entrepreneurial conduct (Weber 1984, 26–7). Implied in his study was the finding that new ethics arise not in anticipation of future capitalistic opportunities, but rather in response to a legitimization crisis in the existing structure: rational economic conduct was thus born in the liberality of a fragmented normative structure.

Robert Merton (1968) defined similar conditions as perceived contradictions between existing ideals (values, goals) and conventional avenues for attaining them (normal means) and as a source of social destabilization, anomie, alienation and social deviance. Referring specifically to rebellion, Merton argued that people are 'not always aware of the structural sources of their thwarted aspirations' or how it came about — 'those who do find its source in the social structure may become alienated from it and ready candidates for (rebellion)'. Rebellion 'presupposes alienation from reigning goals or standards that come to be regarded as purely arbitrary, and the arbitrariness is precisely that which can neither exact allegiance nor possess legitimacy, for it might well be otherwise' (Merton 1968, 201, 209).

For Merton, normative change as social deviance proceeded through several phases by which existing ideological-symbolic legitimations — which

he called the 'old myth' — were replaced by a 'new myth' through an intermediate phase of contestation over a 'monopoly of the imagination'. Here 'oppositional myths' and 'counter myths' contended to define the situation by selectively emphasizing some percepts of social reality while de-emphasizing others so as to 'move the frustrated toward or away from rebellion' (1968, 211).

But where is archaeology to situate normative change in its phenomenology? The work of G.H. Mead and others implies the importance of a domain of communicative interaction which mediates between a culture's ideological background and its foreground of action (Mead 1934; Schutz 1962). As a convenience, I have called it the *middle ground*. It is the interactive domain where social order is created and recreated through the sharing of inter-subjective experiences expressed in common signs; where perceptions of reality are debated, interpreted and evaluated in relation to prevailing ideals; where social order is negotiated; where the authority of society's given codes enshrined in its structural myths weaken, where contradictions are acknowledged, alternative claims to right action lodged, and society's normative codes redrawn (cf. Strauss 1964; Habermas 1987; Foucault 1994, xxi). Thus contrasting the conservativeness inherent in both the domains of ideality and materiality that it mediates between, the interactive *middle ground* is characterized by reflexivity, interpretation, innovation, experimentation, critique, subversion and heresy: it is more chaotic and potentially anomic — the seed ground of non-conformity, rebellion and revolution, and for transformations in the normative system (cf. Foucault 1994, xxi).

I propose that it was in this *middle ground* of communicative interaction that structural changes provided the normative environment for the emergence of class-based relations and social stratification in ancient societies. Initiated by the collectivization of common sentiments, it was where ideological boundaries, and eventually battle lines, were drawn around divergent interest groups; where the normative moral ground was laid for dissension, and for rebellious forms of social conduct like entrepreneurialism.

A middle-ground archaeology sets as its aim the discovery and interpretation of a material commentary on legitimacy, dissension and change. It is, perforce, an archaeology of the artefacts of common discourse — in non-literate cultures, of the artefactual 'handbill' or 'editorial'. As Sackett reminds us, a new art style may serve as 'a rallying point for . . . new developments; it may even itself provide something

of a catalyst for the cultural momentum involved' (Sackett 1977, 376). But in contrast to traditional approaches to ideology, the direction here is away from the formal symbolisms of civico-ritual power and toward the prosaic, mundane, popular, accessible, plastic, temporary and visual — in archaeologies of non-literate cultures, toward a study of expressive media, like decorated ceramics. Here material imagery is viewed as both responsive and proactive, as reflections of and upon society, as interpretive 'myths' about society, and as vehicles, guiding templates, justifications, motivators, and mediators of social relations (e.g. Hodder 1982; 1986; Carr & Neitzel 1995, 3–20, 438; Fischer 1961; Levi-Strauss 1966, 18, 94–5; Csordos 1997; Tambia 1985; Fernandez 1974, 120).

#### *Metaphor and social myth*

In anthropology, metaphor has been studied mainly as a linguistic phenomenon (cf. Fernandez 1974). But in cognitive science, metaphor has been regarded as playing a fundamental role in the formation of human conceptual systems (Jaynes 1977; Sachs 1979; Ortony 1979; Smith 1985; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff & Johnson 1980a,b). Lakoff & Johnson have shown that abstract concepts are largely metaphorical in nature: 'The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another' (1980a, 5). The cognitive function is to supply clarity and comprehensibility to abstract notions and ideas by defining them 'metaphorically in terms of concepts that are more concrete and more clearly structured in their own terms' (1980b, 198). Commonly, this involves casting concepts in terms of: 1) spatial orientations (orientation metaphors); 2) concrete entities, substances, experiences or functions (ontological metaphors); and 3) more clearly delineated concepts (structural metaphors).

The inherent abstractness of notions like society, self, other, community, status, prestige, norm, value, legitimacy, morality, power and authority have made social experiences prime candidates for metaphorical structuring. Students of ethnography and ethnohistory will be aware of the rich cross-cultural repertory of social metaphors (cf. Fernandez 1974). Common examples include the use of up, above, higher, superior as socially 'better', 'more', 'positive'; and down, below, under, inferior as socially 'less', 'worse', or 'negative' (orientation metaphors); defining superiors as 'big' or 'great' (as in 'Bigman' or 'Great Chief'); their words as 'heavy', 'solid' or 'deep'; their leadership as 'firm'; their manner as 'fine'; their status as 'heads' ('headman', 'head priestess'); defining society as a 'pyramid', a 'ladder', 'sta-

ble', 'layered/stratified', 'a large wheel'; defining kings as 'shields' or 'helmets' (ontological metaphors) or 'shepherds to their people' or 'fathers to their children' (structural metaphors). Such metaphors have likely provided cultures past and present with an exceptionally rich basis for structuring social experiences; a means of thinking about otherwise abstract, indiscrete, inchoate normative percepts in more familiar terms of properties, features and behaviours (Fernandez 1974, 120; Lakoff & Johnson 1980a).

For the archaeological study of normative discontinuity, metaphorical imagery provides a cognitive grounding for viewing normative change as the outcome of contestations between competing social myths, that is, in terms of incongruities arising between metaphorically structured conceptualizations of social reality and experienced social reality (see above and Kearney 1984, 52–8, 117; Lakoff & Johnson 1980a, 156; Boulding 1973; Berger & Luckman 1966).

#### *Metaphor and materiality*

Although metaphors are commonly realized in linguistic terms, Lakoff & Johnson make clear that 'abstract concepts are defined in terms of a system of related metaphors in the conceptual level . . . not in terms of words on the linguistic level' (1980b, 201). Recently, Tilley (1991, 124–5; 1999, 271–2) has recognized the implications for archaeology: 'the potency of material symbols [signs] derives from their analogic or metaphorical qualities' which in interpreting artefacts leads away from assumptions of isomorphisms of meaning and language and material culture 'to a position in which materiality of the object world is recognized as not being reducible to language and residing in a metaphoric or analogic logic' (1991, 124). Thus we may assume the potential materiality of metaphorical expression: that concepts so structured will inhere meaningfully in alternative non-linguistic material forms — artefacts.<sup>1</sup>

In his formation of semiotics, Charles Peirce classified metaphors as icons and thus capable of representing ideas objectively. He termed their material expressions *iconic substantive signs or hypoicons*, i.e. 'those which represent the representative character of a representamen [sign] by representing a parallelism in something else'. He also recognized that a material metaphor or hypoicon, like a linguistic one, realized symbolically in language, contains in itself the potential for new meaning; i.e. through observing them, 'other truths concerning its object can be discovered' (Peirce 1955, 102–5). One conclusion to be drawn is that hypoicons as material expres-

sions of metaphorically-structured concepts have inherent, and thus potentially inferable, meaning.

Peirce did not generate a taxonomy of hypoicons suited to archaeology. But cognitive science suggests that concepts and their material expression might be related via widely held rules such as 'inclusion', 'bisection', 'contingency', 'contiguity', 'equivalence', 'temporality', and 'orientation' (Zubrow 1994, 110). Although empty of meaning themselves, such rules may have served as building blocks and organizing principles of cultural schemata (Carr & Neitzel 1995, 450; cf. Cassan 1983) and thus will have manifested themselves in the formal relationships observed in material expressions, such as architecture, settlement patterns and artefacts (cf. Tilley 1999; Lakoff 1987).

Some of these principles may have organized substantive metaphors (*hypoicons*). So it should be possible to derive several basic image categories — the makings of a *hypoiconography* — in which metaphorically structured concepts were expressed in native productions in terms of one or more generative rules (Table 1).

In addition, some concepts might be expressed (metaphorically) by *combinative generative rules*. For example, combining orientation with inclusion rules the concept of *horizontal (social) segmentation* (e.g. the anthropologist's clans, kin groups, tribes) might be expressed by a horizontal partitioning of entity/field, or the concept of vertical (social) stratification (e.g. the anthropologist's classes, ranked descent groups, castes, etc.) by a *vertical partitioning* of entity/field. Likewise by combining orientation with inclusion and equivalency rules the concept of social and/or political access might be expressed by a *horizontal partitioning of converging fields*. Mauss, for example, similarly expressed a dominant metaphorical imagery of *group* over individual solidarity as 'where individuals melt away and become spokes of a giant-wheel' (quoted in Korovkin & Lanoue 1988, 631). Moreover, metaphorical expressions might be strengthened or emphasized by a repetition of design or decorative expressions or 'gestures'.

It should be emphasized that any metaphoric meanings that might inhere to hypoiconic forms do not supersede or deny alternative symbolic meanings. The bull as a common motif in ancient Old World art may denote (as symbol) any number of social, political, mythical or economic statuses. But as a simultaneous ontological metaphor it also connotes the analogical properties common to the bull, e.g. 'fierceness', 'aggression', 'maleness', 'strength' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980a, 40; Fernandez 1974, 120–21).

#### *Metaphorical expressions (hypoicons), normative discontinuity and emergent stratification*

Archaeologists have recognized that the transformation from clan to class relations in prehistory will have involved the adoption of a novel set of normative principles defining the individual's new social identity in relation to kin, society and resources (see Upham 1990; Hodder 1990). This will involve a change specifically from social forms based mainly on kinship principles to forms based mainly or at least more heavily upon contractual ones, involving for instance the emergence of something like an entrepreneurial ethos that condoned and encouraged the attenuation of kinship obligations, the 'rupture of reciprocity' (Upham 1990), and the general withering away of a traditional egalitarian ethos. Such normative deviations will have been by their very nature revolutionary since as Upham states 'Resistance to power and the cooptative control of decision making is a common feature of all small-scale societies . . . the idea of resistance . . . manifest in a communal ethos' (Upham 1990, 110; see also Gilman 1991, 150–51). A basic question therefore is how new normative principles emerged which legitimized the transformation of reciprocal kinship obligations into contractual patron-client agreements (cf. Hodder 1990, 350).

Following Merton (1968) and others, such normative discontinuity will have involved discontinuity in metaphorically-structured social 'myths'. Ethnology supports this relationship. In non-stratified kin-based societies like tribes and chiefdoms a group-dependent image of self tends to dominate. Kearney's dictum 'I am because we are; since we are, therefore, I am' (1984, 53), has been variously expressed in the metaphors, e.g. 'society-as-giant wheel' (Mauss, in Korovkin & Lanoue 1988, 631), 'the tribe as household writ large', or 'the community as family', where the chief is the 'father to his people' and members are 'children' (Sahlins 1968, 48). By contrast, stratified relations may express different social myths consistent, for example, with Kearney's (1984, 53) rhetoric 'We are because I am; I am, therefore, we are'.

#### *Expectations*

From the argument so far it is possible to form general expectations — a theory — about how material imagery (archaeologically observed as *artefacts*) is likely to change with the transformation from ranked to stratified social relationships. The relevant variables will include metaphorical content; temporal morphology, and timing relative to contextual changes. Thus one might expect the transition from ranked to stratified relations (and hence from famil-



**Table 1.** *A hypoiconography: generative rules for substantive metaphors.*

**1. ORIENTATION** Hypoicons as substantive metaphors might express several social concepts in terms of how an *entity/field is oriented spatially to an entity/field* (see Zubrow 1994, 111).

*Examples:* *verticality* expressed in material entity/field oriented vertically (e.g. up/down, superior/inferior, over/under, apical/basal would translate as terms for social hierarchical relationships, e.g. 'superiority'/'inferiority' 'good'/'bad', 'better'/'worse', 'valued'/'devalued', 'independent'/'dependent', 'powerful'/'weak', 'honoured'/'dishonoured', 'successful'/'failed'. Alternatively *horizontality* as expressed in material entity/field oriented laterally, planar, or on a level, would have the following suggested linguistic translations 'equality', 'par', 'peerage', 'egalitarian'.

**2. EQUIVALENCY** Hypoicons as substantive metaphors could express a range of social concepts by exhibiting *equivalence between entities and fields or object and spaces* (Zubrow 1994, 110).

*Examples:* design *complexity* as expressed in the variety, diversity, repetition or redundancy or uniformity of design entities within a design field would have the following suggested linguistic translations: 'complexity'/'simplicity', 'heterogeneity'/'homogeneity', 'diversity'/'uniformity', 'conformity'/'deviance', 'coherence'/'contradiction' (see Fischer 1961, 82). Alternatively *simplicity* as expressed in the redundancy or repetition of the same or similar material entities/elements/fields, might be translated linguistically as 'commonality', 'non-uniqueness', or 'anonymity'. Another example is *symmetry/asymmetry* (Fischer 1961, 83) expressed in material entity/field divided into equal parts, translated linguistically as social 'symmetry'/'asymmetry', 'balance'/'imbalance', 'equality'/'inequality', 'parity'/'non-parity', 'shared judgement'/'authoritarian judgement', 'harmony'/'disharmony'. As a special case of symmetry might be included *circularity* [and/or *concentricity*] as opposed to linearity. The circle, or as it is usually termed 'the mandala' within Jungian psychology is thought to be a universal expression of 'balance', 'integration', and similar concepts (Jaffe 1964). And as a special case of *asymmetry*, *diagonality* as expressed in the orientation of linear entities/fields to the perpendicular, e.g. as leaning, oblique, convergent/ divergent, zigzag, chevron, has been translated linguistically as implying 'imbalance', 'falling', 'direction', 'action', 'motion', 'movement' and 'change' (Aronson 1958, 264).

**3. INCLUSION** Hypoicons as substantive metaphors might express social concepts by expressing that an *entity/field includes an entity/field* (see Zubrow 1994, 110).

*Examples:* *unboundedness/boundedness* expressed as an entity/field demarcated, bounded, enclosed, or separated from entity/field, or entity/field partitioned, sub-divided or segmented may express concepts translated linguistically as social division, e.g. 'segmentation', 'openness'/'closure', 'accessibility'/'inaccessibility', 'segregation'/'integration', 'integrated'/'non-integrated', 'part'/'apart', 'inclusivity'/'exclusivity', 'affiliation'/'alienation', 'native'/'alien', 'insider'/'outsider', 'in-group'/'out-group'.

**4. CONTIGUITY** Hypoicons as substantive metaphors might express social concepts as *entity/field being contiguous within entity/field* (see Zubrow 1994, 110).

*Examples:* *discreteness* as opposed to *indiscreteness* or 'fuzziness' in expressing design elements (Aronson 1958, 264) may express social concepts linguistically translated as 'distinction'/'indistinction', 'individuality'/'anonymity'.

**5. TEMPORALITY** Hypoicons as substantive metaphors might express social concepts in terms of the *originality of the entity/field relative to existing entities/fields*.

*Examples:* *modernity/traditionality*, as in old/new, ancient/contemporary designs could express as metaphors of social 'change/revolution' and 'innovation/conservation'.

**6. ONTOLOGY** Hypoicons as substantive metaphors might express social concepts in terms of the *physical properties and/or functions of the material entity/field depicted, or by logical entailments*.

*For example,* the physical contours of the entity might connote analogous properties of the social world: the [open/closed, flat/undulating, smooth/rough] material entity as [open/closed, flat, undulating, smooth/rough] social landscape. Similarly, known functions, uses, or roles of the entity might express social concepts linguistically translated as 'domestic', 'nurturant', 'holding', 'cooking', 'protecting', 'storing', 'carrying', 'cutting', 'shielding', 'leading', or 'protecting'. Alternatively the known properties or qualities of the entity depicted may express social concepts translated as 'stability', 'growth', 'reliability', 'organic', 'natural', 'volatility', 'danger', 'wildness', 'docility', 'passivity' and 'strength'. As already noted, ontological metaphors are frequently used to structure social and political concepts linguistically (see Fernandez 1974).

ial to more contractual normative principles or 'myths') to involve the replacement of material imagery [*hypoicons*] dominated by expressions or 'communicative gestures' of, for example, *horizontal*, *unboundedness*, *simplicity*, *traditionality*, *symmetry*, *indiscreteness*, *concentricity*, *circularity*, by those of *verticality*, *boundedness*, *complexity*, *originality*, *asymmetry*, *discreteness*, *linearity*, and so on. Previous research provides some support. Fischer (1961, 89) found a strong preference for complex, asymmetrical, enclosed designs among the more highly stratified societies in Murdock's ethnographic atlas. Fischer's predicted associations were later supported by Dressler & Robbins' (1975) study of formal design changes on painted vases into ancient Greece. Similarly, McClelland's (1958) research of ancient Greek pottery style changes supported Aronson's (1958) hypothesis that changing cognitive orientations toward the nature of ego's relation to others can be recorded in changing decorative elements (diagonals and zigzags).

As a basis for anticipating temporal *morphology*, Merton's scheme of normative discontinuity argued that 'old (conservative) myths' are replaced by 'new myths' through an intermediate phase of contestation when 'oppositional myths' and 'counter myths' contend to define the normative situation by selectively emphasizing some percepts of social reality while de-emphasizing others (1968, 211). Thus one might expect to find an intermediate phase characterized by the co-existence of traditional 'old myth' design imagery with new 'oppositional myth' design imagery, as well perhaps as an alternative new design imagery employing conservative metaphorical expressions as a 'counter myth'.

Finally, one might expect that phases of design contestation, co-existence of both 'old' and 'oppositional' (as well as 'counter-myth' designs), will precede chronologically evidence for structural change consistent with 'class' relations.

### **Social stratification and substantive metaphors: a Sardinian pilot study**

With the few exceptions described below, there is presently very little empirical evidence for a systematic relationship between normative discontinuity, metaphorical discontinuity, and discontinuity in material design. The pilot study reported here aimed at evaluating this theory through a preliminary analysis of temporal covariation in pottery design imagery within three major ceramic traditions of late Nuragic Sardinia.

### *Background*

Stratified societies emerged on the Italian island of Sardinia during the Iron Age (900–500 BC) and appear archaeologically similar to more-or-less contemporary 'aristocratic barbarian' societies of early Etruscan Etruria and Hallstatt Gaul. Common features included heroic aristocratic cults, social aggrandizement through warfare, long-distance prestige-exchange, élite acquisition of wealth and power, embryonic socio-economic classes and hierarchical political organization by aristocratic oligarchies. In Sardinia, these resided in the large 'proto-urban' Nuragic settlers (named after the *nuraghe* or tower-house) (Lilliu 1982; 1988, 575; Tronchetti 1988, 19; Ridgway 1988–89, 134; Bernardini 1982, 81–101; Webster 1996b, 153–94).

The stratification of Mediterranean societies during the Bronze and Iron Ages has been a major focus of research for some time. Theories on the problem have usually given primacy to societies' infrastructure and the roles of techno-economic or social factors in providing the motives, means and opportunities for political ascension (Webster 1990; Gilman 1981; 1991; Gilman & Thornes 1985; Lewthwaite 1986; Chapman 1990; Renfrew 1972). A society's superstructure by comparison has generally been regarded in terms of the roles of ideology and religious ritual in legitimizing, stabilizing and extending emergent power relations (Knapp 1988; 1996; Renfrew 1985; Stoddart *et al.* 1993; Barker 1991; Alcock 1993).

My previous research on Nuragic stratification has emphasized the ecology of strategic conduct (labour control and the client–patron relationship), in the emergence of class relations, and on the role of religious rituals, monuments and icons in legitimizing them (Webster 1990; 1996b, 189–90).

The present concern relates to *how such political and entrepreneurial strategies came to be normalized in the first place.*

### *Late Nuragic decorated-pottery traditions*

For this pilot study I have based my interpretations of material imagery on observations of several hundred ceramic sherds from Nuragic sites<sup>2</sup> dating to the Bronze and Iron Ages. My sources were largely unquantified site reports and museum holdings representing some 66 site collections from across the island.

It is first noted that Nuragic pottery was usually *not* decorated at all (decorated vessels account for less than 1 per cent of excavated samples). This may suggest a special communicative importance attached to this ceramic medium. In the six centuries

preceding the appearance of embryonic social classes in the Iron Age record, three major decorated-pottery traditions are generally recognized: comb-decorated, pre-geometric, and geometric. It is suggested that Nuragic pottery design imagery might be meaningfully interpreted in terms of the six generative rules of a *hypoiconography* (above) operating at the levels of vessel imagery, motif imagery and element imagery. Specifically, this material imagery can be 'read' as a coherent pattern of expressions 'structured' in terms of a central ontological metaphor of the general 'vessel-as-social-landscape' type 'upon which' other metaphors were situated.

#### *Comb-decorated pottery*

During the six centuries (1500–900 BC) preceding the Nuragic Iron Age, comb-decorated ware dominated much of the island production of decorated vessels (Fadda 1984). Combed ware is represented by low, open, heavily-built bread-pans bearing impressed and/or striated designs that were presumably made with a comb-like instrument on the interior of the base and sometimes inside walls (Figs. 1–3). The available distributional data suggests that combed wares were most often associated with locally higher status contexts, that is, nuraghe residences and tombs (Webster 1996b, 136). Although regional style traditions are evident, there are widespread similarities in general imagery.

*Vessel imagery.* As virtually the only carrier of decorations during most of the Late Bronze Age, the combed bread pan when read in terms of the substantive metaphors described above conveys first a sense of redundancy, or uniformity [or *simplicity*] within the larger ceramic field. The form was also quite ancient — dating to the Early Bronze Age (2300–1800 BC) in undecorated ancestral *Sa Turracula* varieties — connoting *traditionality*. The pan's wide-open mouth, a prominent feature of this vessel type, also suggests *unboundedness*, while its low, wide profile indicates *horizontality*. By ontology, one might also 'read' in its wide, flat base and heavily-built, thick-walled design qualities of *strength* and *solidity*. By entailment, from the functional association with the domestic context and specifically with bread making, we might also infer associated concepts like *domesticity*, *nurturance*, and *familiality*.

*Motif imagery.* Within regional style zones, combed motifs were highly conservative which seems to underline *traditionality* as a quality. Combed designs are also usually quite simple [conferring *simplicity*],

incorporating only a few simply-executed elements (dots/dashes, lines, circles/ovals). These were characteristically placed over much of the interior of the flat interior base and wall thus emphasizing *horizontality* as well as connoting *inclusivity*. At the same time, designs were but rarely enclosed within well-demarcated borders which might be read as conferring a quality of *unboundedness*. Combed motifs also tend toward *symmetry*: the radial or 'sunburst' motif is most common, where elements (usually dots or dashes) fill horizontal, converging, sometimes partitioned fields and/or concentric [*concentricity*] zones, both oriented to a central disk. These features which, when read as substantive metaphors, suggest qualities of *asymmetry*, *horizontality*, *boundedness*, *circularity*, and [as combinative] *horizontal partitioning of converging fields* (Figs. 1, 2 & 3c, e, g).

*Element imagery.* Combed designs, while expressing overall circularity and symmetry, tend to comprise linear elements like lines of dots, tight parallel lines, heavier 'tracks', or zigzags, which themselves are in turn composed of non-linear elements like dots and occasionally stamped circles. Thus, read as substantive metaphors, design elements suggest qualities of *linearity* contrasting with *circularity*. At the same time their frequent placement within spaced concentric and/or converging fields suggests the quality of *symmetry* (Fig. 3a, b, d, f). In addition, that the individual marks comprising the designs (and sub-designs) are typically crowded into tight, usually poorly or unbounded groupings of redundant elements suggests metaphors for both *unboundedness* as well as *simplicity*. Last, these individual design marks are often at least partially contiguous and poorly differentiated from the overall design field or from each other, which thus gives a visual impression of overall 'fuzziness', or read metaphorically, *indiscreteness*.

#### *Pre-Geometric pottery*

During a brief period at the end of the Late Bronze Age combed pottery was joined by two new decorated wares. Both of these express material imagery (with metaphorical connotations) strikingly different from that of combed wares described above.

The more common pre-geometric ware is called *proto-geometric* (LoSchiavo 1986; Fig. 4). Limited distribution data suggests that it was more often associated with non-élite contexts, i.e. village rather than nuraghe structures (Webster in press).

*Vessel imagery.* Unlike combed wares, a variety of vessel forms were treated with proto-geometric deco-

ration and thus read as metaphor, indicate relative *complexity*. Vessels are typically common open and closed utilitarian forms — jars, bowls and pots — *but not pans* — of widely varying quality — used for cooking, serving and storing. Many represent entirely new and quite different types, connoting perhaps *modernity* over traditionality. These include varieties of beaked and/or oblique-mouth water jars with side strap-handle which give a strong impression of *asymmetry* when compared to contemporaneous bread pans. By ontology their piriform shape and structural imbalance further connote a quality of *asymmetry*, while the near-round and unstable base connotes *instability*, the closed mouth *boundedness*, and the relatively tall profile, *verticality* — all in rather sharp contrast to the imagery of combed bread pans. Functional associations with cooking, storing, serving, but *not bread-making* connote both *domesticity*, as well perhaps as extra-domestic qualities like *wildness* by the association with water-gathering.

*Motif imagery.* Unlike the combed wares, proto-geometric decorations were placed on the vessel exterior, most often on the handles, and beneath the rim on the neck. These might be read as metaphorical expressions of *boundedness* and/or *exclusivity*. The motifs vary widely and usually comprise linear zones of several contrasting elements, read as *complexity*, including chevrons and/or diagonals with lines, punctures, cane-impressed circles, which thus combine contrasting qualities of *linearity* and *circularity*. Similarly, where handle motifs are generally unpartitioned and might be read as connoting *unboundedness*, motifs placed on the body often comprise horizontal zones (bands) vertically separated by incised lines which might be read as *boundedness with vertical partitioning*.

*Element imagery.* Proto-geometric design elements are themselves very simple (read as *simplicity*) and may include incised chevrons and/or diagonals, lines, punctures, and sometimes cane-impressed circles, which combine metaphors of *circularity* with *linearity* and *asymmetry*. The quality of decoration varies but generally the design elements are more carefully executed than on the combed-pans (some finer varieties are termed ‘fish spine’ or ‘foliage’ motifs) which might be read as *discreteness*.

Significantly, a second new pre-geometric pottery form, although far less common, is sometimes found in close association with combed pans. So-called *corniform* ware is named for its raised exterior deco-

rations of stylized horns, often in repetition (Fig. 5). The designs occur on a variety of vessel forms, but typically on very well-made vessels (Moravetti 1990). Unlike combed designs, the more figurative corniforms probably had symbolic as well as metaphorical meanings. Viewed in the context of contending ‘social myths’ the choice was audacious: the image of the bull or ram (as *cornus*) has very ancient Neolithic ritual associations, and in the Late Bronze Age is the ground plan of the so-called Giants’ Tombs, probably elite megalithic tombs (Moravetti 1985; Webster 1996b, 143–6). Apart from possible symbolic denotations to clans, families, personages, genders, offices, deities and the like (cf. Barfield & Chippindale 1997, 114), they might also be ‘read’ metaphorically as allusions to the existing social order in terms of *traditionality*, and by ontology to *strength*.

#### *Geometric pottery*

With the onset of the Iron Age, combed and pre-geometric wares disappeared and were replaced by pottery called geometric (Figs. 6 & 7). The limited distribution data available suggest that compared to combed and pre-geometric wares, geometric pottery circulated in wider social contexts. It was also better made — a possible product of client potters — and frequently exported to high status contexts outside the island (Moravetti 1988; Webster 1996b, 155–6).

*Vessel imagery.* Unlike pre-geometric pottery, geometric decoration was generally reserved for a few varieties of closed jars which one might read as connoting *simplicity*. Moreover all of the forms have immediate antecedents in the proto-geometric repertory which might be read as connoting *traditionality*. Most common are the well-known oblique-mouthed water jugs (*brocca ascoide*) with single side-handle which are clearly stylistic descendants of the proto-geometrically decorated beaked jars, underlining *traditionality*. Like proto-geometric designs, geometric designs express several images: in the imbalanced piriform shape with rounded base, *instability* and *asymmetry*, in the closed narrow mouth and neck, *boundedness*; and in a relatively tall profile, *verticality* (Fig. 6). A second common decorated form (Fig. 7) is described as a ‘flower vase’. Its profile is tall, like the oblique-mouthed jug, connoting *verticality*, but rather symmetrical, and thus strongly connoting *symmetricality*, while at the same time *instability* by its rounded, unstable base, *boundedness* by its closed narrow mouth and neck, and again *symmetry* by its two to four small symmetrically-positioned loop — or ledge handles. In contrast to the pre-geometric



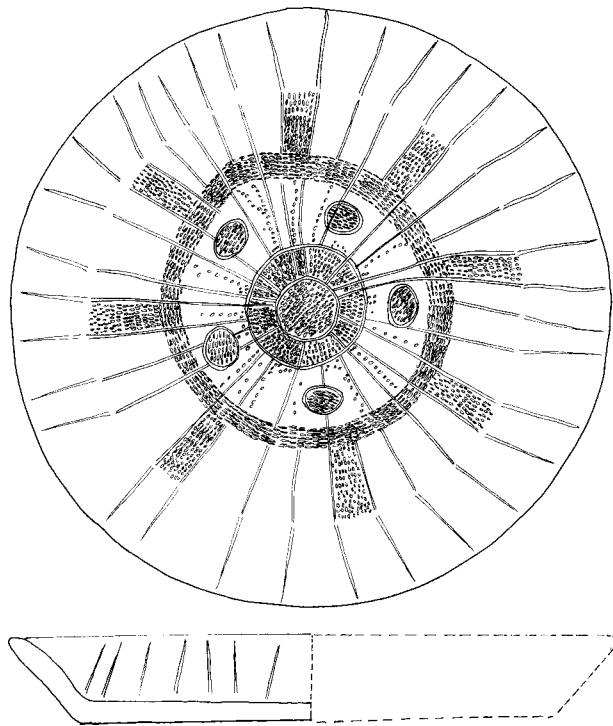


Figure 1. Comb-decorated bread pan (reconstructed).

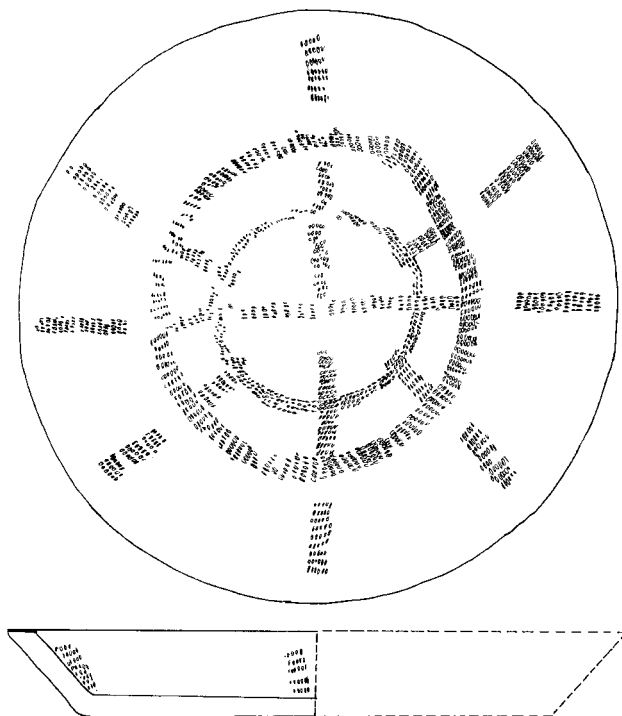


Figure 2. Comb-decorated bread pan (reconstructed).

imagery, the functional associations are exclusively, it seems, with extra-domestic activities associated with the drawing, carrying, decanting or serving of liquids. As ontology hypoicons the connotations include *wildness* and *danger*.

*Motif imagery.* As in proto-geometric wares, geometric decorations were placed on the vessel's exterior (read as *boundedness and/or exclusivity*), but with a greater coverage of handle and body surfaces. Motifs continue to vary greatly even within sites, but individual motifs, while clearly derived from earlier forms (and thus can be read as connoting *traditionality*) incorporate a greater variety of design elements, moving toward a greater overall design *complexity* than in either the pre-geometric or combed wares. This was effected by partitioning the decorative ground into a larger number of smaller/narrower horizontal bands which might be read as connoting *boundedness with vertical partitioning*; while each band tends to enclose a contrasting set of redundantly expressed geometric elements, which can be read as expressing contrasting qualities of *simplicity/redundancy* with *complexity/diversity*.

*Element imagery.* As in proto-geometric designs the elements themselves are very simple geometric shapes, connoting *simplicity*. Many appear to be refined, miniature versions of earlier shapes — thus an emphasis on *traditionality* — which include incised chevrons and diagonals, incised lines, and small impressed circles adopted from cruder proto-geometric varieties, which together suggest contrasting readings of *asymmetry, linearity, and circularity/symmetry*. Other design elements are new, such as stamped cross-hatching, stamped concentric circles, the stamped radial, and the incised zigzag, which similarly suggest mixed metaphors of *symmetry* with *asymmetry, concentricity, convergence*, as well as *modernity*. Some of these may represent re-imaginings of earlier comb-decorated concentric/radial motifs. Geometric elements, however — whether incised or stamped — were characteristically more carefully rendered than in proto-geometric or combed motifs, and thus give a clearer impression of uniformity, which might be read as connoting *discreteness*, as well perhaps as *simplicity*.

#### *Interpreting Late Nuragic ceramic designs*

While alternate 'readings' (symbolic and metaphorical) of Late Nuragic ceramic imagery are of course possible, 'read' as substantive metaphorical expressions of past social experiences they suggest a fairly

coherent set of normative concepts 'structured' in terms of a central ontological metaphor of the general 'vessel as social landscape'. Moreover, variations between the three traditions in terms of metaphorical content, temporal morphology, and timing relative to contextual changes are in general agreement with expectations of a theory of normative discontinuity. The first pottery tradition of the series — comb-decorated wares — is characterized by design imageries dominated by expressions (or 'communicative gestures') of *simplicity, traditionality, inclusivity, unboundedness, horizontality, symmetry, circularity, concentricity, and indiscreteness*, and by functional associations, *strength, nurturance, domesticity, stability. Boundedness and asymmetry [diagonality]* are limited to the combinative rule expression *horizontal partitioning of converging fields*. By contrast, *linear* expressions are found only as sub-designs composed of *circular* elements. In metaphorical terms the 'social landscape' connoted was 'open', 'accessible', 'inclusive'. It was *within* (as opposed to *outside*) this 'landscape' that other metaphorical expressions were situated. Those, when linguistically translated,<sup>3</sup> connote normative concepts like 'equality', 'unity', 'balance', 'accessibility or openness', 'co-operation', 'segmentation', 'accessibility', 'inclusivity or affiliation', 'mutuality or interdependency', 'tradition or conservativeness', 'simplicity', 'stability', 'solidity', 'anonymity', 'familiality', 'nurturance', 'domesticity'. The normative 'picture' metaphorically depicted then is not inconsistent with the one drawn from the ethnology of societies in the middle-range of social complexity, that is, with more-or-less egalitarian, socio-centric, kin-based, segmentary, acephalous, and reciprocity-governed societies.

But how well do these interpretations fit with archaeological reconstructions of the broader cultural context? As noted, combed pottery was remarkably conservative within style zones. Yet there is evidence for profound change in other aspects of

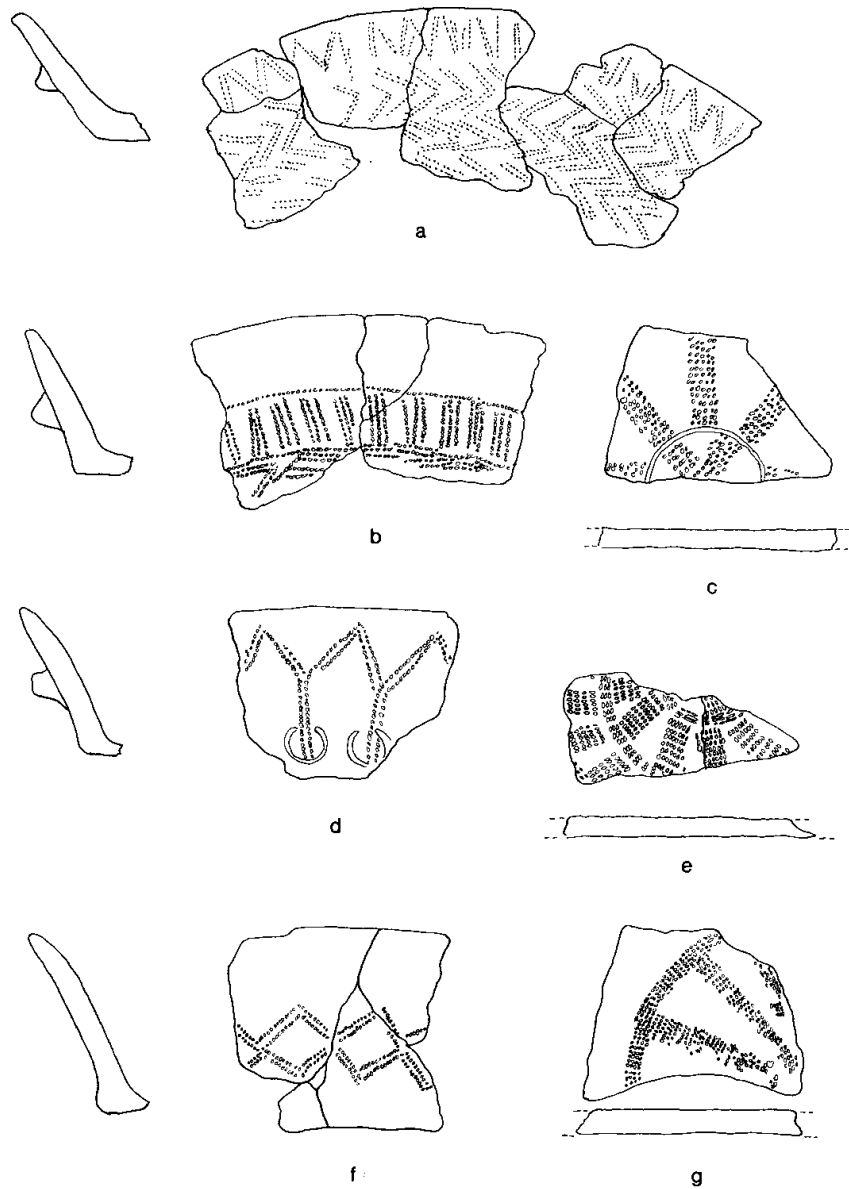
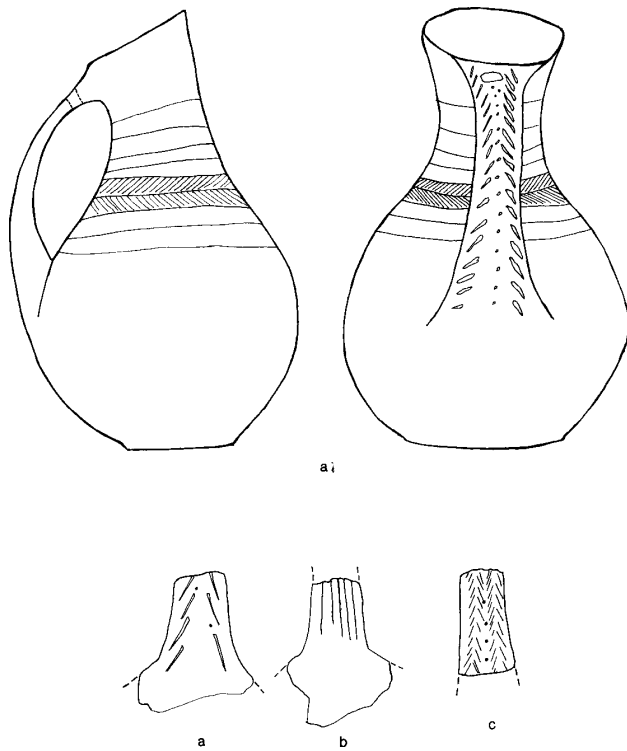
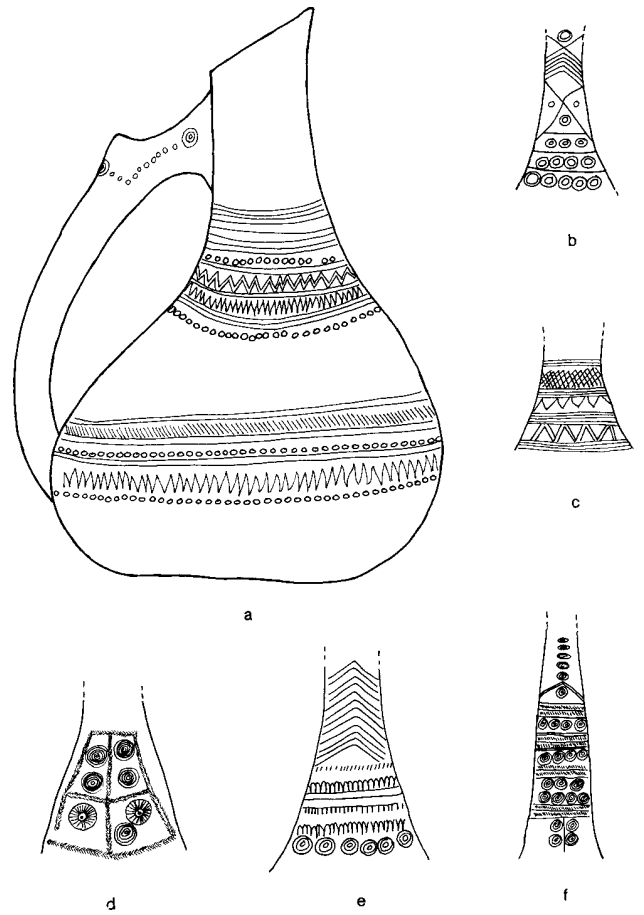


Figure 3. Comb-decorated bread pans (sherds).

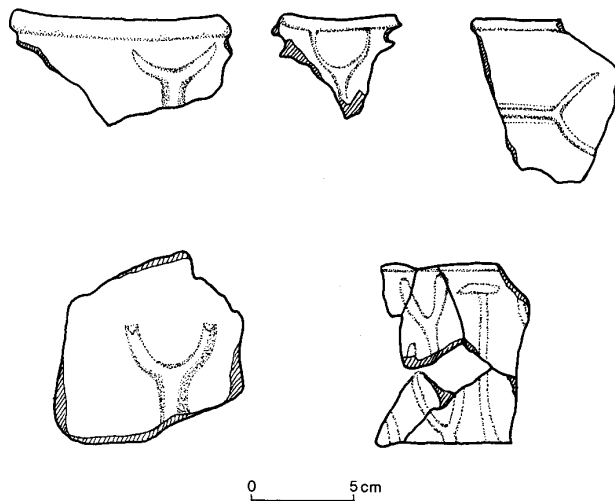
culture during the same period. From the early Middle Bronze Age when combed-pans first appear to the end of the Late Bronze Age when they are replaced by geometric wares, the island's population expanded greatly, a settlement hierarchy emerged, agro-pastoral economies intensified, metallurgy expanded, extra-insular trade increased, and residential, mortuary and some wealth differentials signalled a transformation from localized, egalitarian tribal-like societies to regionally centralized hierarchical ones on the order of chiefdoms (Phillips 1991; Webster 1996b, 108). Yet comb-impressed ware remained basically unchanged — impervious, it seems, to the



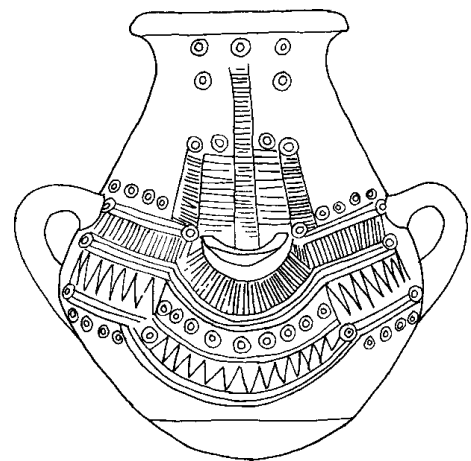
**Figure 4.** Proto-geometric jars: a) reconstructed vessel; b) handle sherds.



**Figure 6.** Geometric water jars of oblique-mouthed variety: reconstructed vessel; handle sherds (b–f).



**Figure 5.** Pre-geometric corniform-decorated sherds.



**Figure 7.** Geometric water jar of flower-pot variety (reconstructed).

changing social realities. The pattern is not inconsistent with the theory that combed pottery came to perpetuate what amounted to a conservative social myth — like Sahlin's 'conical-clan' myth of 'equality within hierarchy' and 'polity as family' (Sahlins 1968), or Merton's 'old [social] myth' (1968, 211).

The imagery expressed by proto-geometric pottery of the Late Bronze Age also tends to follow expectations. In contrast to contemporaneous combed imagery it carries mainly expressions of *complexity, innovativeness, asymmetry, instability, boundedness, verticality, boundedness/exclusivity, boundedness with vertical partitioning, linearity, discreteness* and by functional (ontological) association extra-domestic allusions to, for example, *wildness*; while there are proportionally fewer expressions of *unboundedness, circularity, and domesticity*. Thus when 'read' as substantive metaphorical expressions of normative sentiments the proto-geometric imagery connotes not only a strong normative variance (deviance) from that expressed in the combed imagery but also an opposition to it.

The proto-geometric 'social landscape' can be read as generally more diverse, more often 'closed' than 'open', and where communicative gestures were situated on-the-outside, external to it. These gestures moreover most often express less-egalitarian concepts, for example, 'superiority', 'diversity', 'deviance', 'contradiction', 'disharmony', 'inequality', 'authoritarianism', 'segregation', 'exclusivity', 'alienation', 'individuality', 'innovation', 'change', 'instability', 'wildness', 'stratification'. Juxtaposed materially and metaphorically to traditional combed imagery, it might be understood as producing what Korovkin & Lanoue (1988, 618, 631) have called 'a second order of meaning', one which opposed, defied, unbalanced, and neutralized the 'old conservative myth'. It may have been a symbolic protest, and a transgression from the given normative code and a critical first step in 'rendering it liable to experimentation and adjustment' (Korovkin & Lanoue 1988, 618, 631); in Merton's terms, an '*oppositional myth*' (1968, 209).

The contemporaneous appearance of 'corniform' imagery — when interpreted as substantive metaphorical expressions — presents further contrasts to the proto-geometric. The corniform motif drew upon the normative authority inherent both within the ancient symbolism (the bull) as well as its perhaps more fundamental connotations of *traditionality* and *strength*. Its effect may have been that of Merton's conservative 'counter myth'; that is, a 'contender' in a terminal Late Bronze Age 'contest' for control of imagery — a myth announcing that 'whatever the source of mass frustration, it is not to be

found in the basic structure of the society . . . these frustrations are in the nature of things and would occur in any social system' (Merton 1968, 210; cf. Miller & Tilley 1984, 7).

But what is known of the social circumstance of such contestations? It has been argued from available field data that by the terminal Late Bronze Age many localities experienced diminishing economic returns under increasingly intensive agro-pastoral regimes, a condition possibly exacerbated by environmental deterioration. At the same time, conflict and warfare were increasing. Perhaps most important, differences in living standards between and within settlements were becoming more pronounced. This last impression is heightened by increasing residential contrasts between the now castle-like nuraghe-compounds of the chiefs and the rude huts of surrounding villagers (Webster 1996b, 125–9; Phillips 1991, 84–5). But one should not assume that such material contradictions alone need have undermined popular faith in the 'old myth' had its promoters successfully incorporated them into it, as presumably they had done up to that time. Other factors are implicated.

There is good evidence that prestige imports from the eastern Mediterranean (although never numerous) had sharply declined in the latter part of the Late Bronze Age, a result of the larger disruptions of the Aegean Dark Age (Webster 1996b). Perhaps the inability by Late Bronze Age chieftains to acquire the exotica that previously had proved and signified their special qualifications as leaders sufficiently weakened their status, under the prevailing material conditions, to cast doubt on the whole normative structure (see Kearney 1984, 52–8). Blake's (1997) study of iconographic disunity in one category of material expressions (nuraghe-models) suggests that ideological tensions were being expressed within some ritual media as well.

The imagery of geometric ceramics which replaced combed and pre-geometric pottery at the beginning of the Iron Age, when 'read' metaphorically, is both more complex and contradictory.

On the one hand much of the imagery follows the anticipated trend toward a greater expression of concepts (metaphorically structured) consistent with normative changes conducive to the emergence of class over kin relations and contractual over familial norms. As in the ancestral proto-geometric pottery the imagery expresses *asymmetry, instability, verticality, boundedness, vertical partitioning, wildness or danger, complexity/diversity, linearity, modernity, and discreteness*. Read metaphorically as communicative



gestures they express non-egalitarian concepts and sentiments such as 'superiority', 'diversity', 'deviance', 'contradiction', 'disharmony', 'inequality', 'authoritarianism', 'segregation', 'exclusivity', 'alienation', 'individuality', 'innovation', 'change', 'instability', 'wildness'. These expressions are reinforced moreover by the segregation of the vessel-as-social-landscape itself. As in proto-geometric vessels, it is 'closed', and its constituent social elements (communicative gestures) are situated externally. But it is even more clearly vertically partitioned into a number of diversely-constituted but internally homogeneous horizontal fields. Much of the 'new' geometric imagery can be interpreted as the metaphorical expression of a more vertically-oriented social landscape, one partitioned into a diversity of internally (socially) uniform divisions — a picture consistent with the concept of class-structured social relations: a stratified society.

But the imagery also contains expression not anticipated by the theory and in opposition to it: *simplicity, traditionality, symmetry, circularity, concentricity, and convergence*. Read metaphorically they express more traditional egalitarian norms. Several explanations suggest themselves. The first is that these represent decorative 'noise': expressions carried over from more ancient traditions for predominantly symbolic or stylistic reasons, so that their potential metaphorical connotations are unintended. The second is that the theoretical relationship between normative discontinuity and its substantive expression in hypoicons is fallacious or incomplete. This provides the stimulus for further queries.

If we assume that the theory is basically sound but incomplete, on what basis can the 'residual' observations be incorporated into a more sophisticated but still coherent new (geometric) myth? One alternative might interpret the new (geometric) social imagery as involving a more complete re-structuring of previous (combed and pre-geometric) concepts. At one level, allusions to egalitarianism were down-played relative to inequality, thus producing a new imagery consistent with a shift from the older socio-centric toward a newer egocentric definition of self. It thus contrasted the 'inward-looking' (i.e. 'affiliative') imagery of the 'old clan myth' with allusions to new, perhaps less kin-bound, 'outward-looking' ideas within a society now perceived as more risky and alienating. At another level, by retaining or reintroducing new re-imaginings of more traditional expressions the overall imagery might also be read as ambiguity, contradiction, compromise and liberality. Expressions of 'inclusivity', 'affiliation', 'co-

operation' seen in the re-imaginings of traditional shapes like the small concentric circle and radial might be 'read' as surviving allusions to the 'old (combed pottery) myth' now symbolically devalued by co-option within the new (geometric) code.

One can further speculate, following the arguments of Korovkin & Lanoue (1988, 618, 631), that by contradicting and co-opting the traditional 'authority' of combed-ware imagery, previously masked contradictions within the structure of terminal Late Bronze Age society were 'mirrored' (in geometric imagery) and the paradox symbolically 'solved'. So interpreted, geometric imagery expressed the normative contours of a new social myth, an ethos of liberality and individualism produced by a *compromise* with preceding oppositional myths in which contested concepts were incorporated and the resulting internal contradictions neutralized. While the new imagery may not have explicitly promoted classism over clannism or clientship over kinship, it may have provided the normative latitude conducive to the kinds of entrepreneurial activities which brought stratification into being. The new dominant 'geometric' myth, in Merton's words, 'both located the source of large scale frustrations in the social structure' while portraying 'an alternate structure which would not presumably give rise to frustrations of the deserving. It was a charter for action.' (Merton 1968, 210.)

In Iron Age Sardinia the new ethos took its active form as competition among élites for the patronage of non-local client craftsmen essential to successful trade relations with Phoenician settlers (Webster 1996b, 153–94). The normative changes expressed in geometric imagery may have facilitated these activities by providing the moral basis for them. Significantly, many geometric designs (diagonals, chevrons, concentric circles), as well as earlier *cornus* motifs, were 'retrieved' and engaged within ritual contexts as symbols and icons on votive jewellery, weaponry, figurines, statues, and on temples and tomb facades (Lilliu 1988, 417–70; Fig. 8) — all of which signalled the 'official' legitimization (through sanctification) of the new myth.

## Conclusions

What has been done? I have proposed that normative discontinuity (as would have been engendered by the emergence of social stratification) might be documented archaeologically in the substantive metaphorical imagery (hypoiconography) of artefacts of common discourse — especially decorated ceramics.

The interpretations presented here constitute but one possible 'reading' of the evidence. I make no claims against others. Inference is after all partially a product of the interpretive framework within which it is situated — to a significant degree a subjective exercise. Iconographic decipherment regardless of the medium is an especially dicey business. Criticism of the present project will centre rightly on the metaphoric 'readings' of the ceramic imagery; on their plausibility compared to alternative interpretations. All design imagery carries multiple meanings. Such multivalency allows the individual to grasp alternate layers of meaning within any single design expression. It is incumbent on the analyst to 'decode' or interpret these alternative 'layers of meaning' through a contextual analysis of the structure and organization of artefact designs.

I have argued that a theory of metaphorically-expressed normative sentiments makes coherent sense of variability in ceramic imagery in the pottery produced in Sardinia during the latter part of the Late Bronze Age and initial Iron Age, just prior to the appearance of embryonic social classes archaeologically. When 'read' in relation to a system of generative rules for expressing social sentiments through substantive metaphors — the proposed *hypoiconography* — these data 'reveal' a record of normative discontinuities which can be meaningfully related (as contending social myths) to parallel trends in the wider cultural context.

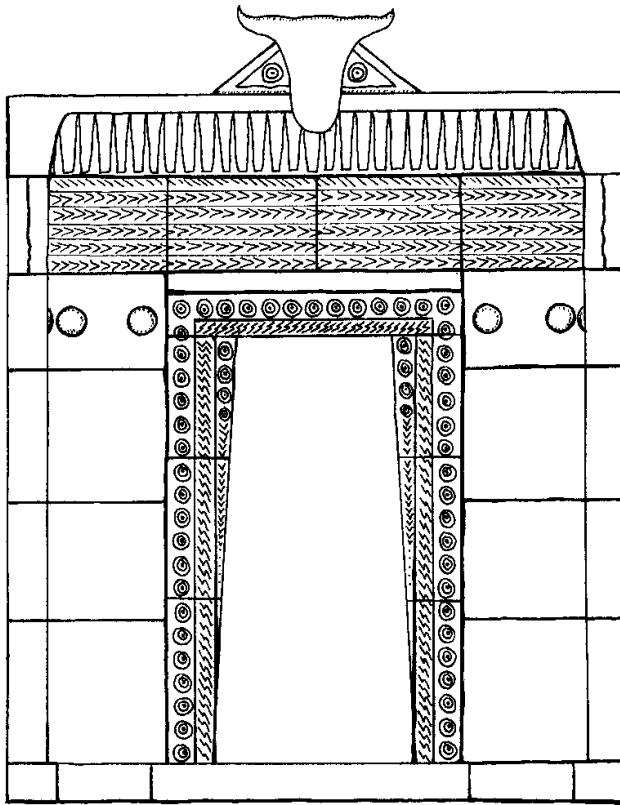
While the facts of stratification came about in the conjunction of historical, social and ideological circumstances of the Sardinian Iron Age, its ideals, its motivating ethos, and its guiding norms had an earlier origin in the normative chaos of the terminal Late Bronze Age, when, for some at least, old ideals collided with present experience, contradictions were exposed, the 'old myth' lost its legitimacy, and the seed ground for social change was laid. The normative 'rupture' which facilitated a transition from a kin-based to class-based ethos was *not* then, to borrow from Foucault, '... an undifferentiated interval — even a momentary one — between two manifest phases; it [was] not a kind of lapsus without duration that separates two sides of a split; it [was] always a discontinuity specified by a number of distinct transformations . . .' (1972, 175). The middle-ground archaeology advocated here hopes to open up this interval to inspection.

## Notes

1. A metaphorical logic differs from the symbolic logic

or metonymy more commonly employed in archaeological interpretations. 'Metaphor is primarily a way of conceiving one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is it allows us to use one entity to stand for another' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980a, 36). Symbols express X by Y, while metaphors express that X is Y. Symbols denote (i.e. one entity standing for another), as in the part for the whole, while metaphors *connote* meaning by analogy (Renfrew 1994, 5; Smith 1985; Tilley 1991). The distinction is a critical one since symbols have posed special problems for archaeologists (cf. Garwood *et al.* 1991; Barfield & Chippindale 1997, 125), the primary one being arbitrariness: lacking inherent meaning themselves, symbols need bear no resemblance to their referent. Hence little *independent* meaning is likely to be inferred reliably from a direct study of the symbolic image or object alone. Metaphorical signs on the other hand are in themselves meaningfully constituted in the sense suggested by Hodder (1986).

2. The characterizations of ceramic imagery for this study are based upon a non-statistical survey of published, unpublished and museum-displayed pottery from the following sites: Santu Antine-Torralba, Santa Vittoria-Serri, Sant'Anastasia-Sardara, Bia 'e Palma-Selargius, Piscu-Suelli, Sa Serra-Serrenti, Santa Barbara-Macommer, Duos Nuraghes-Borore, Urpes-Borore, Serbine-Borore, San Sergio-Borore, Toscono-Borore, Losa-Abbassanta, Funtana-Ittireddu, Palmavera-Alghero, S'Urbale-Teti, Is Lapideddos-Gonnosfanadiga, Sinis di Cabras (23 sites), Brunku Madugui-Gesturi, Corti Beccia-Sanluri, Serra Orrios-Dorgali, Rimedio-Oristano, Su Nuraxi-Barumini, Prisciona-Arzachena, Nurdole-Orani, Nastasi-Tertenia, Chessedu-Uri, Lugherras-Paulilatino, Bidistili-Fonni, Lerna-Pattada, Sa Roccatunda-San Vero Milis, Genna Maria-Villanovaforru, Antigori-Sarrok, Albucciu-Arzachena, Punta Casteddu, Monte Olladiri-Monastir, Sala 'e Serra-Mara, Palatu-Birori, Monte de S'Ape-Olbia, Su Mulinu-Villanovafranca, Logomache-Fonni, Pirosu-Iglesias, Sant'Imbenia-Alghero, Monte Idda-Posada.
3. Tilley (1993, 111) has warned of the perilous nature of writing about non-linguistic images. While all such analyses require communication through the symbolic medium of language, linguistic terms must be recognized for what they are — *translations* of the visual material under study. The meanings of material metaphors inhere not in the linguistic texts that describe and discuss them, but in the metaphorical structure of the materially-expressed concepts themselves — in the hypoicons. We need not, in fact, assume that the artists themselves or their audience necessarily translated the visual imagery linguistically. But analysis of the present sort requires such translation, and it must be understood that this engenders the corruption of iconic meaning(s) as we move by linguistic translation



**Figure 8.** Reconstructed façade with geometric decorations from the sacred well of Sant'Anastasia in Sardara.

from the immediate visualizations of the images themselves.

Gary S. Webster  
Jägärvägen 17  
931 40 Skellefteå  
Sweden

Email: [pioneers@privat.utfors.se](mailto:pioneers@privat.utfors.se)

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