

# Greek islands

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CHRISTINA SOUYOUDZOGLOU-HAYWOOD. *The Ionian islands in the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, 3000–800 BC*. xvi+293 pages, 21 figures, 73 plates. 1999. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; 0-85323-654-2 hardback £65.



CYPRIAN BROODBANK. *An island archaeology of the early Cyclades*. xviii+414 pages, 124 figures, 12 tables. 2000. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 0-521-78272-4 hardback £50.

Both these books deal with Greek islands and both are derived (albeit extensively revised) from doctoral dissertations, but this is as far as the similarities go. While Christina Souyoudzoglou-Haywood's book is an accomplished summary of published and unpublished material evidence, Cyprian Broodbank's work is an innovative and challenging theoretical approach to island landscapes and interaction. This difference in approach is reflected in their divergent bibliographies. Indeed, the material-based nature of *Ionian is-*

*lands* is obvious in its bibliography, which lists very few books from the last decade and, when the author refers to theoretical concepts such as 'frontier studies' and 'island studies', the most recent references are from 1985. Broodbank's book, on the other hand, is utterly up-to-date based on an impressive collection of references.

Christina Souyoudzoglou-Haywood modestly describes her book as an attempt to summarize and present hitherto inadequately published Bronze Age and Protogeometric material from the Ionian islands. However, this book is much more than a mere catalogue. What at first glance looks like a gazetteer is in reality a highly accomplished synthesis of a large body of material. In addition to providing a reinterpretation of much material, this volume will be of great help for both students and scholars as it summarizes inadequately published material as well as preliminary accounts and full publications by Greek and German scholars.

The introductory part is divided into four short chapters. The first covers the geology and geogra-

phy of the islands, the second provides an overview of human habitation between the Palaeolithic and Neolithic. Chapter 3 is devoted to a summary of the history of archaeological exploration on these islands and, since some material from Kerkyra has been found on the islands under discussion, chapter 4 presents a summary of material culture from Kerkyra.

The main body of the text consists of the presentation and discussion of the material evidence from the islands of Lefkada, Meganisi, Kefalonia, Ithaki, and Zakynthos. The discussion of each island is subdivided into several categories including a list of sites, settlements, burials, metalwork, jewellery, miscellaneous finds (all subdivided according to period). This structure implies that evidence may be presented twice but it has the advantage of allowing or supporting interpretations rather than simply cataloguing of finds.

The author deliberately focuses on previously inadequately published artefacts. This has both positive and negative implications: on the positive side is that it allows her to be very concise in her description, as she needs only to refer to published sources; on the other hand, this also has the result that useful maps or plans are not reproduced here and need to be looked up in the original publication. On a purely stylistic note, placing the vital maps on the front and back inside cover of the book seems to be an ingenious way of saving space; however, having a site distribution map of each island in the relevant chapter would improve the handling.

This book is a well-researched and well-collated summary of already published as well as unpublished material from the Ionian islands. While the author also assesses interpretations, the value of this book primarily lies in its coverage of the material.

The title of Cyprian Broodbank's book neatly summarizes its two main themes: firstly, the need to reevaluate our understanding of islands and islanders and, secondly, to investigate how such a new view on islands can further our understanding of dynamics in the Early Bronze Age Cyclades. Jack Davis' comment on the inside jacket of the book summarizes the importance of this highly accomplished and beautifully written work. He states that this is 'the first book on the prehistoric Aegean since Renfrew's *Emergence of Civilisation*. Current in data, method, and theory [. . .]'. While not attempting to be a new *Emergence*, I am confident that its impact on scholars working in the Early Bronze Age Cyclades (and indeed later periods) will be felt for many years to come.

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Broadly speaking, the book is divided into three sections of greatly varying length. The first section coincides with the first chapter and sets the scene for the remainder of the book. Here the author casts a critical glance at island archaeology. Having discarded outdated concepts such as 'island laboratories', Broodbank, while drawing heavily on authors working in the Caribbean and Oceania, sets the agenda for a more inclusive understanding of islands. Four key points are of great importance for scholars working in the Cyclades (or indeed any other islands) and worth repeating here. 1 Insularity is not an abstract geographic fact but may be socially constructed. As a consequence, an island may or may not be the ideal unit of analysis, and we certainly should not presuppose it to be so. 2 Models need to begin to take the sea into account and consider how and by whom it was used. 3 Insularity is a social construct. We need to investigate by what means and for which purposes insularity was devised. 4 The surviving material culture needs to be investigated for its potential in elucidating island social practices, not merely as a marker of culture groups. Future research into the Cyclades will hopefully pay increased attention to these factors, allowing scholars to write a more specific and multi-dimensional history of islands. Chapters 2 and 3 form the second section and provide indispensable background information for the Cyclades (current state of knowledge and a history of investigation, environment and resources, seafaring).

The remainder of the book makes up the third section and, on its most basic level, is an evaluation of established and new models of development and interaction in the Cyclades in chronological order from the Neolithic to the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. One of the running themes is that of changing integration or isolation in the Early Cyclades.

Broodbank divides the discussion of each chronological phase into two basic components. After presenting his model (such as Proximal Point Analysis), he uses it to reinvestigate the material culture. Modelling has long been recognized as a suitable tool for archaeology, and the author has used this device cleverly. By basing his models on evidence 'external' to archaeological material culture (such as population density) and comparing the excavated patterns with the externally derived ones, both similarities and differences can be highlighted more strongly and potential strategies employed by different groups become more apparent. To give an example, great differences are apparent between the Saliagos and the Grotta-Pelos cultures. The former exploits fertile land as well as special resources; it is characterized by comparatively large settlements. The latter has widely dispersed small settlements near pockets of land of variable quality. Thus, two

different strategies are employed: one focusing on nucleation near fertile resources, the other emphasizing dispersion to spread the risk. Both strategies appear to be equally valid in the context of the Early Cyclades, though changes in population density or climate may privilege one strategy over the other. A more extensive example is Broodbank's analysis of the Keros-Syros culture locations, in particular the intriguing importance of Daskaleio-Kavos. The known site locations cannot be explained through conventional models such as access to arable land, harbour facilities, or mineral resources. However, when applying Proximal Point Analysis the author could claim four hits (Daskaleio-Kavos, Agrilia, Grotta-Aplomata, Grotta-Pelos graves of Greater Paros), one near-miss (Chalandriani-Kastri) and two misses (Agia Irini, Skarkos). All hits were located in areas of exceptionally intense communication — a reflection of the settlements' strategies. The (near-) misses warrant some explanation. Chalandriani-Kastri may have suppressed the predicted centre on Tenos, while Agia Irini may have acted as a gateway community for people travelling between the Cyclades and Attica. Skarkos defies all explanations and its size may be the result of an as yet undeciphered strategy. However, the author moves beyond straightforward modelling to suggest potential strategies employed by Daskaleio-Kavos. He convincingly argues that the prominence of the site lies in the power of the longboat, the use of conspicuous consumption and the manipulation of valuable objects to enhance and store power.

The benefits derived from Broodbank's models outweigh by far their disadvantages, such as determinism and inflexibility which, after all, are common to most models. Indeed, the benefits are such that one wonders why archaeologists of later periods have not exploited their potential (admittedly, nucleation may make the application of proximal point analysis problematic). Nevertheless, it is striking that most theory-building and innovative thinking in Aegean archaeology is associated with scholars working in the Early Bronze Age. Is this because the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age have the lure of the 'origin' of the Cycladic people and therefore attract more attention or is it rather the unspoken agreement among scholars that the emergence of the Cretan palaces in the Middle Bronze Age explains all further developments? One thing is certain: the Middle and Late Bronze Age need theories and models as much as the preceding periods.

While interaction with Crete and the mainland is very important and may explain much, it certainly does not explain all of the distribution patterns in the Cyclades. More research needs to focus on local exchange and the ways in which Cycladic islanders constructed and manipulated their relationship with the two large players.

Drawing the two books together, both accomplish and frequently supersede their stated goals. *Ionian islands* is a well-designed, comprehensive and carefully worded synthesis of published and unpublished material, while *An island archaeol-*

*ogy* moves Aegean archaeology into the 21st century and demonstrates beautifully how modelling and a careful analysis of material can improve and diversify our understanding of the Early Cyclades.

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## Gender agenda?

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LENA LARSSON LOVÉN & AGNETA STRÖMBERG (ed.). *Aspects of women in antiquity*. 191 pages, plates. 1998. Sweden: Elanders Graphic Systems AB; 91-7081-188-1 hardback SEK200.

TRACY L. SWEELY. *Manifesting power: gender and the interpretation of power in archaeology*. xiii+210 pages, 34 figures. 1999. London: Routledge; 0-415-17179-2 hardback £55 & \$85; 0-415-19744-9 paperback £16.99 & \$24.99.

SUSAN KENT (ed.). *Gender in African prehistory*. 352 pages, some black-and-white illustrations. 1998. Walnut Creek (CA), London & New Delhi: Altamira Press; 0-7619-8967-6 hardback \$65 & £50; 0-7619-8968-4 paperback \$25.95 & £19.99.

RUTH D. WHITEHOUSE (ed.). *Gender and Italian archaeology: challenging the stereotypes*. v+229 pages, figures. 1998. London: Accordia Research Institute & University College Institute of Archaeology; 1-873415-18-4 paperback £32.

Until recently, explicit awareness of gender has been seeping slowly into the consciousness of archaeology as a discipline. Gender archaeology has in the main taken the form of edited volumes, that embrace gender as a topic independently of temporal or spatial references. In the recent flourish of gender literature we begin, however, to discern both the emergence of a distinct field and the development of different approaches within it. In particular much more specific discussion of gender is emerging as it is becoming disciplined and contextualized. Volumes concerned with distinct areas of the discipline, such as may be generated from working within regional, chronological or thematic frameworks, are now being produced. The volumes reviewed here are parts of this progress. Although this development is not the topic under consideration, the maturing of the debates and the intellectual appropriation of gender into various genres and discourses constitute a significant background for a review of current gender publications. It is therefore the underlying question that this raises about the status of gender research that is of relevance here. This is so because the more

or less explicit *raison d'être* shared by the volumes reviewed is that gender as a general phenomenon can — may be even must — be analysed not as an abstract structure but as part of social conditions constituted within specific temporal and/or spatial frameworks. The four volumes reviewed do not constitute a coherent discussion in terms of either approaches or the archaeology referred to. Therefore, in considering them together, one may more usefully see them as an indicator of the diversity and different interpretations of gender archaeology. Their differences may then be drawn upon to consider whether and how each relates to the wider project of engendering archaeology both as disciplinary practice and an interpretive engagement.

Three of the volumes, Kent's, Whitehouse's and Larsson Lovén & Strömberg's, explore gender through its expression within a limited geographical area either through time (Whitehouse), with little attention to chronological periods (Kent) or within a specific period (Larsson Lovén & Strömberg); while the fourth volume (Sweely) joins two major concerns, power and gender.

The volume by Whitehouse, as indicated by its sub-title, aims to challenge stereotypes. In addition to the introduction, which sets the scene, so to speak, of gender archaeology with regard to Italian archaeology, there are 13 papers. The authors, apart from two from the US, were all based in Britain at the time of writing. Italian archaeology, as acknowledged with regret by the editor, therefore means archaeology focussed upon Italy rather than revealing (or at least including) an Italian perspective upon the issues raised. The papers range from discussions of the Palaeolithic to the Iron Age. Out of this diversity a sense of consensus nonetheless arises since the contributors, despite some variation in their interpretation of what constitutes gender and how it should be analysed, clearly are all familiar with and draw directly upon the core of recent Anglo-American gender research. This means that gender is more or less explicitly analysed as a cultural construct, which is reflected in different material expressions

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