throughout will be a significant tool to those researching individuals or naming conventions.

There is an appendix collecting the milestones from the Roman road running north to south from Mismiyyeh to Ariqah (615–30). The inscriptions are presented in the same clear and useful manner as the rest of the publication. The appendix does not add any new evidence to the original publication of Dunand detailing the milestones of the road through the Lejâ. It seems proper, however, to have them included in this compendium of inscriptions from Trachonitis. It is interesting that, despite the sheer weight of epigraphic material presented in this volume, the editors believe that significantly more is yet to be found (9).

As I have briefly shown here, the corpus is a rich resource for the political, social, and religious history of the plateau of Trachonitis and the Hauran in general. Both volumes are very well presented, although there are one or two very small changes that might be usefully made: the map of sites mentioned is only found at the end of volume two and not in volume one; there is no index of village magistrates or officials, one must use the list in the introduction. The two volumes benefit enormously from the considerable expertise of the editors. It is rare that a publication such as this is quite so well aware of the epigraphic context in the wider region. Inscriptions are given incisive and often comprehensive commentary; the publication as a whole benefits greatly from the wealth of useful interpretations given by the editors.

Durham

Donald A. MacLennan


No other region in the Mediterranean has been as innovative in cultural expression, while at the same time as conservative in accepting and adapting new ideas, and as insular in the communication of its own concepts during the Early Iron Age as Crete. During this period, the archaeological landscape of this Mediterranean rather than Aegean Island lived on the memories of its already legendary Minoan past, and then underwent initial major changes caused by the so-called colonization movement in the Mediterranean after a period in which ideas had restricted mobility. It was exactly due to these two adversarial factors that an Early Iron Age cultural identity on the island was formed, and pottery is its most modest witness. Crete was perhaps one of the last regions in the Aegean where the Protogeometric style found its way into local pottery production, occurring shortly before the style began to expire in Attica, usually supposed as its place of origin. However, a truly innovative pottery style only appeared with so-called Protogeometric B (PGB) pottery, plausibly contemporary with Attic Middle Geometric I (MG I).

Ivonne Kaiser’s book, originally her dissertation at the University of Heidelberg, explores Cretan geometric pottery beginning with the extraordinary PGB pottery phase up to the end of the Late Geometric (LG). After laying the objectives of her study in a short introduction and comprehensively discussing the history of research, Kaiser explains her method and makes a few useful comments on the Cretan chronological system (11–17). The ambitious objective of this book is to present for the first time a synthetic overview of the regional geometric styles of Crete. Due to the uneven level and quality of research it is normal that some regions of the island are not as well represented as others. Unlike the old and recent exhaustive publications of cemeteries, settlements and sanctuaries in central Crete, information on the eastern part of the island comes mostly from preliminary reports and catalogues of pottery, while our knowledge on West Cretan pottery styles suffers from methodologically problematic publications that treat pottery – in a rather old-fashioned way – out of context (Eleutherna). Coldstream offers the most trustworthy chronological analysis of Cretan geometric pottery resulting from his research at Knossos, while the synchronization of the regional styles of West, Central, and East Crete remains a desideratum. Unfortunately this is not one of the objectives of this book although it would fit the formal analysis of the pottery that is presented. This means that the author accepts a priori the pottery dating proposed in initial publications; though not a problem for central Crete, I remain quite skeptical about the proposed dating of western and eastern Cretan pottery as well as any synchronization with the central part of the island.

Kaiser’s book consists of three chapters. The first offers an analysis of the pottery shapes and decoration in form of a catalogue. The author examines closed and then open shapes. She gathers most of the already published, well preserved geometric vessels that come mostly from necropolises and presents their development in chronological order. Her research would be more profound, had she taken into consideration well-dated finds from the numerous final or preliminary reports on settlements and other non-funerary Cretan sites. Nevertheless, Kaiser offers a synthetic study that treats the Cretan pottery as a whole, while demonstrating existing regional variability and its development through time.

The first shape discussed is the Cretan pithos, a characteristic local form that was closely associated during the Early Iron Age with the burial rite of cremation (19–40). Every scholar who has been engaged in the study of Cretan pottery came up against a rather chaotic ceramic shape nomenclature and the Cretan pithos is a typical example. The problem is not, however, that the same term is used to describe different shapes or that the same shape is called by another name in other regions of the Aegean. The actual problem is the numerous alternative names proposed for the Cretan pithos and other shapes. Were it necessary to create a consistent terminology for pottery over time and across the Aegean, we would have to change the names of other shapes, e.g. those of the kylix and skyphos which refer to several different shapes in the Aegean from the Late Bronze Age. However, Kaiser’s book does not offer such a consistent terminology for pottery in Crete.

Kaiser, Kretsch geometrische Keramik


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Age to the late Classical period. This would bring a certain homogeneity to Greek pottery, whereby most of the open and closed shapes would be called bowls or jars. Kaiser, who does not discuss these issues, does well to use the well-known nomenclature of Cretan pottery already established by renowned scholars. In her study of the Cretan Pithos, the author examines all types of this shape by adding examples from all over the island and briefly commenting on their origin, offering an overview of the shape’s development, its decorative schemes and motifs over time across the island. More or less the same method is used also in the analysis of other shapes. The Cretan idiosyncrasy and eclecticism is well illustrated in the reception of the Attic meander on the local versions of belly-handled amphorae. In contrast to their Attic colleagues who always depicted this motif vertically, Cretan potters applied it horizontally (46). However, a further in depth comparative analysis of the Cretan amphorae and their Attic or Cycladic atticising counterparts is lacking.

A disturbing issue in the study of Cretan geometric pottery is the problematic seriation that mostly relies on ill-defined burial contexts in tholoi and chamber tombs used over many generations, rarely taking into account the results of modern stratigraphy. It is strongly believed that Cretan pottery exhibits a linear development of style and local ceramic sequences are not unjustifiably dependent on the Attic series. This has inevitably resulted in problematic conclusions in the study of several shapes such as hydriæ, especially the atticising ones (59; cf. especially the hydriæ no. 104.90 and 78 [MG] and 104.91 [LG]).

Kaiser’s observation concerning the popularity of some particular shapes (62), preferred as burial gifts in certain periods (i.e. jugs in PGB–EG), demonstrates how informative a systematic statistical analysis of burial gifts in Cretan tombs could be for the understanding of several religious and other aspects of social life. Leaving aside the inherent difficulties in discerning a proper typo-chronological sequence of certain Cretan vessels such as the aryballos (80–85), to mention a characteristic example, we certainly find more interesting information in Kaiser’s discussion of the bell craters, which are no longer decorated with spiral trees from PGB onwards. From then on trees that may have had a symbolic meaning appear on straight-sided pithoi that replaced the former as cremation urns (113).

The first chapter ends with a summary in which Kaiser draws her more important conclusions (138–139): most of the geometric shapes derive from a local repertoire, whereas local potters were also inspired by Cypriot, Attic or Corinthian wares. The author observes a tendency in the decoration of Cretan pottery from light (PGB) to dark (LG) in the central and eastern parts of the island, while its western part has yielded dark ground pottery as well as decoration in added white by the Late Protogeometric. A last important point is the appearance of curvilinear motifs especially on hydriæs and jugs during PGB, the most innovative period of geometric Cretan pottery. Finally, it is interesting how certain motifs such as the meander were being adapted in regional Cretan pottery styles, with the eastern part of the island showing greater resistance to extra-insular ideas.

1 Ebd. 341.
The second chapter of the book treats the decoration of Cretan Geometric pottery. Analysis begins with the human figures, which have a special meaning closely related to the burial context they belong to. Most of them make their appearance during the PGB and come up again sporadically only during the LG period. The discussion focuses on the female figures on two straight-sided pithoi from Knossos. Kaiser undertakes a very systematic and accurate formal analysis which critically comments on older interpretations and shows quite persuasively that on each vessel a goddess was depicted that was meant to care for both life and death. This personification was a direct descendant of the old Minoan religion that survived during the earlier phases of the Early Iron Age as some figurines with raised hands and a similar iconography on several Minoan larnakes, which may have been visible during the Early Iron Age, attest (142–150). Equally convincing is the analysis of the well-known scene on the so-called Zeus lid from Fortetsa that dates to the LG period (153).

Another important feature of the figural style of the PGB period that also survives in the following geometric phases is the tree. Kaiser’s analysis demonstrates that the form of the spiral tree owes more to the older Cretan tradition than to any external stimulus. However, she does well to keep some reservations about the origin of the idea, which was flourishing during preceding centuries in the Near East (156–160). After all, more important than the type was the idea of the tree as an integral part of a scene that was formally as well as ideologically transformed several times on its way from the Near East to the Aegean. And if we want to stick to the typological detail, we must not forget that there are also other types of trees (not spiral) in Crete that are closer to the Near Eastern. Finally, another common feature is the triangular lower part of the tree’s trunk.

In her discussion of birds depicted on PGB pottery, Kaiser demonstrates the limits of traditional archaeological practice to keep interpretation of cultural material restricted within a usually pointless search for origins by concluding that they originated from nature itself (163–165). On the other hand, no one can deny that the idea for the Cretan bird askoi derives from Cyprus and as Kaiser argues this must have been merely a reflection of closer affinities between the two Mediterranean islands in funeral rites since askoi, which were usually found in tombs, were ritual vessels (168). Birds remained popular in the iconography of LG, although undergoing significant transformations during this period and suffering at least a partial loss in significance (171–174). Kaiser argues that aside from the bird, other motifs, such as fish and octopus (these appear only in LG and have their origins in Late Minoan I), also had some symbolic meaning relevant to death (175–179). The author further undertakes the analysis of every

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other creature that appears on Cretan geometric pottery, most of them with similar symbolism. She recognizes the oriental origin of the sphinxes as well as of the griffins, although she discerns in the latter some features inherited from the Minoan tradition. More complex is the discussion of the lion’s origin on pottery and the comparison with the contemporary iconography in Cretan toreutic art. Although the Cretan horses of the MG are depicted differently than the static Attic ones, they must still have derived originally from Attic pottery (189–192) as opposed to other animals such as goats and deer that had a long tradition in Minoan art (192–193).

After having examined the human, animal and hybrid figures, Kaiser exploits the fascinating geometric and linear decoration of Cretan pottery starting with the reception of the Attic meander in PGB and its adaption on Crete. I think however that the author is overreacting in her clearly pro-Cretan feelings, when she states that the quatrefoils in the metopes that flank a central field with a meander on a Cretan open shape, that I would call a cantharos, are of purely local origin (198). This is a typical atticising synthesis of MG II–LG Ia. Running loops, which usually appear in pairs with the area enclosed filled with hatching, spirals and the so-called cables belong to the most typical ornaments of the impressive curvilinear style that marks the passage from the Cretan PG to PGB. These ornaments together with leaves and quatrefoils constitute the decoration of one of the most innovative pottery styles of the Early Iron Age in the Aegean, which however had no impact at all on other pottery styles outside Crete. If we follow Kaiser’s argumentation we may explain this innovative period in Cretan pottery painting as the result of internal development in local style and iconography with very few foreign contributions (cables) (199–222). This elaborate and complex PGB pottery style did not last long and began being dismantled soon after the reception of the atticising meander in the local decorative repertoire during MG (226). At the end of chapter two Kaiser synoptically states the results of her analysis of decoration, whereby the central role of Knossos in the development of Cretan Geometric pottery is highlighted (224–226).

The most interesting part of Kaiser’s book is definitely chapter three, which is unfortunately rather short. This includes a concise discussion of the development and reception of Cretan pottery. At the beginning Kaiser sets the theoretical frame of her interpretation. Her focus lies on the mechanisms responsible for the reception and adaption of ideas in ceramic production: The appropriation of ideas that originate in other regions or periods of time is part of a de- and re-contextualization process. The first case study is the Cretan neck-handled amphora. This Attic shape appeared in Crete during the transformative PGB period with its decoration adapted to the current Cretan geometric style but, most importantly, with another function: it was no longer used as a cremation urn in its new context but rather as a burial gift. I have however serious reservations regarding its meaning as a prestige object as is sustained by Kaiser. After that, the author illustrates the case study of Creto-Cypriot lekythoi and jugs, which not only imitated the form of Cypriot prototypes but must also have had the same

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function, i.e. as perfume vases. The author argues by means of ethnographic parallels for the engagement of travelling Cypriot potters in the production of these perfume vases on Crete, which in contrast to the neck-handled amphorae retain both type and function of the original Cypriot prototypes. Kaiser then undertakes an interesting discussion about the appropriation from PGB onwards of older motifs that used to belong to the ancient Cretan tradition. She argues persuasively that the reappearance of these old motifs was due to a certain continuity in religious beliefs. In other words potters came upon old motifs that belonged to an earlier funerary iconography, with which they were acquainted, and recycled them in the style of their time simply because they wanted to use them to express the very same meaning in a similar context. This is a point already made in previous analyses by Kaiser, where she attempted to demonstrate the sepulchral connotations of several themes and motives in Cretan geometric iconography (227–233). The second part of the book’s last chapter is devoted to the Cretan interactions with the Orient. Kaiser reserves this part for a discussion of theories concerning the presence of oriental craftsmen on the island during the second half of the 9th century BC that has usually been employed as an argument to explain breaks in local tradition. She convincingly rejects the previous theories that used to recognize Orientals among those buried in the much debated Kianiale Tekke Tholos and looks more effectively for them in the sanctuary of Kommos. Although Kaiser is keen on stressing the continuity in Cretan pottery style by arguing that some of its most progressive features have mistakenly been so far interpreted as the result of interaction with the Orient, she cannot help but admit in the last pages of her book that certain technological innovations in other crafts demand other explanations (233–236). tattoo

Stefanos Gimatzidis


Lo studio monografico prosegue due filoni ormai tradizionali nella ricerca di W. Hoepfner: quello sullo sviluppo urbano e sulla ricostruzione delle poleis di età classica and l’interesse per la regione sud-orientale dell’Egeo, tra Rodi e la costa caria. La materia è presentata in due sezioni, la prima (pp. 10–69) dedicata alla topografia storica di Halikarnassos/Bodrum, suddivisa in due capitoli, la seconda concentrata sul Mausoleo (pp. 70–133), in tre capitoli, e si completa di un appunto conclusivo (pp. 134–144) con la raccolta delle fonti letterarie, le note e le principali abbreviazioni bibliografiche.
