



Review

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tion before. This phenomenon of foreign connection in the third millennium—with Sardinia and perhaps the Iberian peninsula—spans more than one phase of the Sicilian Early Bronze Age (including part of what is often called the “Copper Age”). In northwest Sicily, the closely spaced beaker-style incision was transferred to local pottery. Along the south coast the beaker presence becomes episodic. The beaker may well be a signpost of social differentiation that the author and others believe accompanied the arrival of metallurgy.

The “elite” of the Early Bronze Age has another manifestation in the carefully executed chamber tombs of Santa Febronia presented by Laura Maniscalco. Metallurgy in the second and first millennium is also the topic of Rosa Maria Albanese. Both foreign connections with the Aegean and the development of a rich industry between the 13th and eighth centuries are examined. In this connection, Claudio Gardino’s paper on mining and metallurgical techniques is especially important, detailing the notable mineral resources of the northeast corner of the island, especially in copper, but also in iron, silver, and lead. Leighton asks if the transition from the Bronze Age through Final Bronze to the Iron Age cannot be described as the passage from chiefdom to tribe. Massimo Frasca, Dario Palermo, Francesca Spatafora, and Rosa Maria Albanese all describe separate regions of the island at the end of prehistory. Finally, Claire Lyons reviews Sikel burials at Morgantina and the interesting but incomplete acculturation of this community in the seventh and sixth centuries.

As is perhaps inevitable in a collection such as this, there is more of the detail than of the grand theme. Moreover, the grand themes—chiefdoms, metals and social differentiation, elites and their tombs (perhaps also serving as territorial markers)—seem a bit shopworn because they are all second-hand. It would be foolish to deny that Sicily participated in the universals of human experience. But one might hope that grand themes closer to the singular identity of this great island could be identified. Some of the more promising sites for this purpose were barely published when these papers were collected and so unfortunately are not considered or mentioned only in passing. The excavations of Giuseppe Castellana at Monte Grande and Ernesto De Miro’s work at Polizzello have amplified the initial discovery of the regional sanctuary at La Muculufa, showing that these places were the organizing centers of early Sicilian society, as regional sanctuaries were in mainland Italy. Much more could be said about commerce within the island and abroad, as Leighton has done with stone tools and Maniscalco with the export of ocher. The Sicilian cult of the dead has been illustrated in a spectacular fashion in the excavations of Castellana at Ciavallaro, a site that also brings new evidence to the difficult problem of the chronological overlap of the Castelluccian pottery style and that defined at Tindari, Rodi, and Vallelunga.

One should not forget the remarkable continuity of Sicilian culture. Whatever the aspirations of emerging elites, whatever the influence of Mycenaeans and others from abroad, there remain the constants of Sicilian life: the veneration of the dead, the perpetuation of the simple Sicilian house, and most characteristic of all, sitting on the floor or on a low bench to eat from a conveniently elevated pedestal bowl. At the outset of the collection, Leighton quotes

Leonardo Sciascia’s assertion that the history of Sicilian culture must be written from the most ordinary facts. For this reviewer, it is these facts that make such history live.

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A ROUGH AND ROCKY PLACE: THE LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT HISTORY OF THE METHANA PENINSULA, GREECE, edited by *Christopher Mee and Hamish Forbes*. (Liverpool Monographs in Archaeology and Oriental Studies.) Pp. ix + 370, figs. 236, tables 23. Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 1997. £55. ISBN 0-85323-741-7.

The tone in the introduction (ch. 1) to this, the most recent book on archaeological survey work carried out in the Peloponnese, is refreshingly British in its use of amusing epithets and understatements. Regarding Ovid, for example, it is said that he is “not renowned as a geologist” (1). Talking about survey methodology, Forbes and Mee say that “strict adherence to the finer tenets of field survey theory . . . might lead to sudden death” (3–4). Their style of writing alone succeeds in making the reader eager to read on.

The survey of the Methana peninsula was carried out between 1984 and 1986. Thus, it has taken 11 years for this final publication to appear. As will become evident for any user of this volume, however, the end product is a substantial presentation of data that has completely filled the “blank spot on the map” previously represented by Methana.

The second chapter, written by James et al., deals with the physical environment of Methana—or, more exactly, the formation, exploitation, and change of this environment. There are several longer, expertly written sections about the rocks, soils, and geomorphological development of Methana. Easier to digest for a nonspecialist are the more general parts on environmental change and human settlement. Of special interest is the discussion about the age of terraces (frequently found in the Mediterranean landscape). It is argued that the distribution, age, and quality of artifacts on and within (20 cm) terrace soil, taken in conjunction with enhanced phosphorus values across several terraces, can be used to date these. This seemed like a promising start in how to deal with the dating of a recurring feature in any Mediterranean survey: therefore, it was somewhat of an anticlimax when the authors concluded that “the age of terraces requires further and urgent investigation” (28).

In a useful table (30–31) the authors have summarized the environmental events from one million years ago to the present, in relation to the human settlement pattern on Methana. The only reservation I have is that the events said to have occurred during EH I–II are contradicted several times in previous pages. Thus, how can there be talk of an extensive deforestation when no evidence has been

found of a forest? It is as if the authors do not themselves believe in one of their most important conclusions, namely, that large regional and local variability exists in the history of soil erosion.

The third chapter is a well-written and surprisingly frank discussion on survey methodology coauthored by Mee and Forbes. This chapter reads like a thriller where every vital decision taken in the field is documented. The pragmatic approach taken to solve methodological problems can occasionally be called into question. Mee and Forbes use "different sampling procedures" for sites of different sizes in the area; the one used for multi-period sites, however, has never been explained in detail. The size of the area walked during the first season, when no counts of off-site distribution were made, is not given. Without this information we are left wondering whether the high off-site density figures for Methana would have been different had off-site counts been made in 1984. The reason given for not collecting off-site artifacts that year—namely, that the artifacts are "damaged"—must surely also apply to on-site artifacts (40). Despite criticisms like these, this section is appealing not least for the straightforward and honest presentation of the problems encountered.

Prehistoric Methana is presented by Mee and Taylor (ch. 4). A rather cursory look is given to the Neolithic period, whereas the EH period for natural reasons is described in more detail. The scarce finds of MH and LH date are dealt with in two short paragraphs, while a long detailed discussion on the chipped stone has rather surprisingly been hidden away between the EH and MH sections. Here the reader could ask for a text that integrates the chipped stone more closely with the pottery: as it stands, it is not a homogeneous part of the prehistoric chapter. The discussion on EH pottery is exhaustive, but I do not agree at all with the main conclusion that "the decline in EH II seems unlikely" (45) and therefore that site numbers were the same in EH I and EH II. This is built on a preconceived idea, rather than factual data gathered in the survey of Methana, and is rather surprising to find in an otherwise generally sound scholarly report. Once again, it is as if the authors do not believe in their own conclusion that "the sequence of events is not precisely the same in every region" (53).

Chapter 5 presents Early Iron Age and Archaic Methana and is admirably well written by Gill and Foxhall. In this chapter frequent comparisons with other survey results have been made, which enhances the usefulness of the text. From this point on, five different chapters deal with Classical and Hellenistic, Roman, Late Roman, medieval, and finally Turkish and modern Methana. These are all well written and are clear presentations of the new information gathered by the Methana survey. Vital contributions to this report are also a catalogue of churches (ch. 12), written by Koukoulis, and appendices 1–3, which conclude the material presentation from Methana. Once again one can only marvel at the impressiveness of survey results in general.

A richly illustrated catalogue of sites using photographs, sketches, and drawings occupies close to 100 pages (118–210) and has been compiled by Mee and others. This catalogue is clear, succinct, and relevant, and it sets an example for other directors of survey projects who are on the verge

of writing up their final reports. The main criticism of the layout of the book is that the information on individual artifacts has been placed in three different places: the drawings are at the end of the catalogue (175–210, in general printed too dark), while the discussion and comparanda, if any, of the artifacts are to be found in the different chapters (42–117), and a large artifact catalogue, including all registered artifacts, constitutes appendix 4 (282–343). In addition, the text of the report is unnecessarily compressed, especially considering how much empty space there is at the bottom of each page.

Overall, despite these criticisms, Mee and Forbes have made an important contribution to our understanding of the history of the Methana peninsula in the Argolid. It is not a small undertaking to carry out and edit a final report of an archaeological surface survey. In *A Rough and Rocky Place*, massive amounts of data have been processed and given a clear presentation, for which the coeditors are to be applauded.

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LES CITÉS ANTIQUES DE LA HAUTE VALLÉE DU TITARÈSE: ÉTUDE DE TOPOGRAPHIE ET DE GÉOGRAPHIE HISTORIQUE, by *Gérard Lucas*. (Collection de la Maison de l'Orient méditerranéen 27; Série épigraphique et historique 4.) Pp. 248, pls. 13, figs. 16, tables 4. Maison de l'Orient méditerranéen, Lyons 1997. 150 FF. ISSN 0985-6471; ISBN 2-903264-19-8.

In view of the rate at which major changes take place in the Greek countryside, the need to make detailed records of concerted field observations is paramount and every publication of such material has its indisputable importance. For nearly 20 years, a team from the Institut Fernand-Courby (CNRS—Université Lumière Lyon 2) has conducted (and continues to do so) such a program of intensive survey in Thessaly. The book under review is but one of the products of that work, and the volume must be seen in its context to appreciate its whole, considerable value.

The Lyons team comprises Bruno Helly as its leader, together with Jean-Claude Decourt, Laurence Darnezin, and the author of the present study, Gérard Lucas. In addition to the actual team, the project has the very considerable logistical and practical support of everyone at "Courby," a team spirit reflecting the continued influence of the Institute's founder and former director, the late Jean Pouilloux, and, through him, that of the late Louis Robert, for so many decades the leading authority in Greek epigraphy.

This context makes clear the reality of the teamwork by which alone this sort of project can be brought to fruition, the sort of teamwork that has characterized many