ART AND IDENTITY IN DARK AGE GREECE, 1100–700 B.C.E.

This book explores how art and material culture were used to construct age, gender, and social identity in the Greek Early Iron Age, 1100–700 B.C.E. Coming between the collapse of the Bronze Age palaces and the creation of Archaic city-states, these four centuries witnessed fundamental cultural developments and political realignments. Whereas previous archaeological research has emphasized class-based aspects of change, this study offers a more comprehensive view of early Greece by recognizing the place of children and women in a warrior-focused society. Combining iconographic analysis, gender theory, mortuary analysis, typological study, and object biography, Susan Langdon explores how early figural art was used to mediate critical stages in the life-course of men and women. She shows how an understanding of the artistic and material contexts of social change clarifies the emergence of distinctive gender and class asymmetries that laid the basis for classical Greek society.

Susan Langdon is associate professor of Greek art and archaeology at the University of Missouri. A scholar of early Greek pottery, sculpture, and iconography, she curated the exhibition From Pasture to Polis: Art in the Age of Homer, from which she published the exhibition catalog and *New Light on a Dark Age*, a volume of papers from the accompanying symposium. She is also coauthor of *Artifact and Assemblage: The Finds from a Regional Survey of the Southern Argolid, Greece, I: The Prehistoric and Early Iron Age Pottery and the Lithic Artifacts*.

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For Cy and Lydia

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The origins of this book go back 15 years, to my planning for an exhibition of Geometric Greek art. The idea was to present about 100 objects from North American museums and collections according to the themes of funerary customs, religious practice, artistic styles, and foreign contacts. In bringing together pots and bronzes, jewelry and seals, I realized that what was missing from this warrior-populated display was women. By 1993 there existed a growing body of "women in Homer" literature, but archaeological and artistic studies were a different matter. Aside from some rudimentary work on grave markers and mourning scenes, the visual evidence had barely been tapped. At first glance, Geometric art seems an unpromising field for exploring questions of gender. It is a world of manly affairs – warfare, chariots, games, and heroic funerals – where women serve as mourners and bystanders. As for the Geometric artists' particular talents, diversity, nuance, and detail are not terms that usually come to mind. With the exhibition behind me, I undertook to identify archaeological and iconographic evidence for women wherever it might appear. I soon realized that what was needed was not a study of female representations but of gender as a potent social force that spanned the human life-course. Instead of straining to spot the occasional woman, I found the dynamics of gender everywhere: sometimes it seems it was the main concern of Geometric culture.

My writing began in halcyon days at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina. I owe a tremendous debt to the NHC for their early support and for friends there, especially Carla Antonaccio, Jody Bilinkoff,

Tim Taylor, Sherry Ortner, Kent Mulliken, and Robert Connor, who helped this project get off the ground. The Archaeological Institute of America gave me the chance to try out my ideas on unsuspecting audiences as a participant in their society lecture program. Any AIA lecturer knows that one's best thinking about a complex topic can happen on the road and in discussions with different groups of people. On other occasions I benefited from conversations with friends and colleagues who have shared, and sometimes helpfully tempered, my enthusiasm for this approach. I cannot mention them all, but I would like particularly to acknowledge Tracey Cullen, Tim McNiven, Meg Milanick, Sarah Morris, John Papadopoulos, Paul Rehak, Jerry Rutter, Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell, Anne Stanton, Robert Sutton, and Jane Waldbaum.

My argument for the centrality of visual culture in the Early Iron Age ultimately rests on the objects themselves. Thanks to a generous subvention by the Kress Foundation, I am able to illustrate here a number of less familiar works, as well as several major monuments of the period. Research Board and Research Council grants from the University of Missouri helped defray the costs of photographs. For help with acquiring illustrations I am indebted to John Boardman, Irene Bösel, Eva Bournia, Marion Büchner, Sally Gray, Joachim Heiden, Katarina Horst, Sandrine Huber, Jan Jordan, Amalia Kakissis, Dietrich Klose, Craig Mauzy, Ingo Pini, Andrew Reyes, and Charles Watkinson. Special thanks go to Beatrice Rehl, publishing director at Cambridge University Press, who made this possible. My greatest debt is to Marcus Rautman, who probably read this book more times than I did, and made it better.

Although Homer has always been with us, archaeological interest in the Greek Dark Age came about gradually in the early 20th century. Unsurprisingly, women played a key role in the early study of this modest, pre-monumental phase of Greek culture. The great ladies of the Greek Dark Age – Sylvia Benton, Hilda Lorimer, Edith Hall, Harriet Boyd Hawes, and (more recently) Evelyn Smithson – deserve to be remembered for their pioneering efforts to bring a marginal period to light.