CHAPTER FOUR

SANCTUARIES AND CULTS OF THE PROTOGEOMETRIC, GEOMETRIC AND ORIENTALIZING PERIODS

1. Introduction

In the course of the PG, G and O periods, the Aegean world, including Crete, witnessed a number of distinct changes that would prove to be of lasting importance. Although these changes did not affect all regions of the Greek world in the same manner or at the same pace, they generally involved a growth of population, the progressive articulation of an aristocratic class and its associated political structures, a widening or intensification of foreign contacts and trade (both within the Aegean and with the Near East), and the flowering of various crafts and industries. The period—here referred to in short as the Early Iron Age—may therefore be seen as a truly formative period. In Crete, as elsewhere, communities that were to be the principle actors in Classical and later history became well established as large, nucleated settlements with associated cemeteries and sanctuaries of various forms.

The general increase in archaeological evidence from c. 800 BC onward and the concomitant reappearance of skills such as writing and specialised craftsmanship have led to a characterisation of the

---

1 For concise surveys of these changes: O. Murray 1993, 7-15; De Polignac 1995b, 3-9; Osborne 1996, 19-51; I. Morris 2000, 195-201; Whitley 2001, 77-101. Population growth was probably not as steep as first proposed by Snodgrass (1980, 19-24), who envisaged a multiplication by seven from 780 to 720 BC in Attica. For a revision, taking into account the probable distortion of the funerary data because of the exclusion of some social groups from formal burial: I. Morris 1987, esp. 72-73, fig. 22, 156-58; accepted by Snodgrass 1993, 31-32. See also the discussion in Osborne 1996, 70-84.

2 In other studies, the term EIA usually refers only to the PG and G periods.

3 This despite the seeming gap in use of many Cretan settlements, cemeteries and sanctuaries in the 6th century BC: for a discussion of this problem Prent 1996-97.
8th century BC as a ‘Greek Renaissance’.

During the past decades this period has become an object of study in itself. Analyses initially concentrated on the plentiful material from tombs and on associated funerary practices, providing valuable insights into demographic as well as socio-political and ideological developments. Studies of EIA sanctuaries and cult practice followed suit and attempted to explain the growth and diversification of cult practice that became apparent in this period. It has been persuasively argued that the drastic increase of material evidence for cult activities from the 8th century BC onward means more than a simple multiplication of worshippers or intensification of existing votive behaviour. Rather, the ‘qualitative and quantitative increase in [permanent] dedications at a wide range of different kinds of sanctuaries suggests that an ever greater proportion of personal wealth was being invested by individuals from a wider range of social groups.’ This implies changes in the functions of cults and cult places, many of which can be connected to the complex of broader changes referred to above. Scholarly attention has, to a large extent, focused on the redefinition of sanctuaries and cults in relation to what is generally considered a crucial phenomenon of this period: the formation of the Greek city-states or poleis, which, in contrast to the palatial states of the Bronze Age, formed a mosaic of hundreds of small but independent territories. Despite recent critique of this line of research, the phenomenon of early state formation in EIA Greece remains of great importance for an understanding of the function of sanctuaries during this period. A discussion of some of the more recent studies on polis

---

4 Coldstream (see Hägg (ed.) 1983, 149) has pointed out that the term was first employed in this sense by Burn (1936, 150). For its usage in recent books, e.g. Snodgrass 1971, 416; id. 1980, 15-84; Coldstream 1977a, 20, 109; Hägg (ed.) 1983. See also Morgan 1990, 1; Antonaccio 1994, 80.


6 Morgan (1993, 19), elaborating on ideas formulated by Snodgrass (esp. 1980, 52-54); see also Coldstream 1977a, 338 and, for further discussion, section 4 of this chapter, p. 355-58.


8 Especially by S. Morris (1992b, xvii-xviii; ead. 1992a, 123-24; ead. 1997, 64-65), who argues in a polemical manner that the emphasis on state formation ‘has acquired a monolithic, nearly totalitarian set of powers over contemporary scholarship’.