

An Island Polity: The Archaeology of Exploitation in Melos



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The Greek island of Melos in the Cyclades has been inhabited for at least five thousand years. Two periods of its history are well documented: the late Bronze Age, when it supported an important urban centre at Phylakopi and the late fifth century BC, when as an independent city-state it briefly defied and was then destroyed by the expansionist power of Athens. The case of Melos is thus relevant to the understanding of the processes of early state-formation and of the integration of small-scale societies into larger political units. As the contributors to this volume show, a small island provides a very suitable area - clearly defined, self-contained - in which to examine the processes of social, cultural and economic change and the forces - sometimes gradual and almost imperceptible in their effect, sometimes sudden and dramatic - by which changes are initiated.

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