I read with great attention and interest the dissertation of Lucilla Barresi. Her convincing arguments, always accompanied by accurate documentary data, have provided a larger picture of what is known about the topic from previous studies and made my task, in the role of “opponent”, very difficult to identify possible gaps or shortcomings, moreover not found.

Therefore, the very few critical comments presents in my report will be just suggestions, in view of a possible, and hopefully near, publication of the thesis, to a young colleague of sure competence, which has been shown, with this work, to have an own character and a definite place within the varied scientific production dedicated to the Daunian civilization.

The title of the study carried out by Lucilla Barresi clearly summarizes the topics and theories developed in her dissertation, which is focused on Geometric pottery made in Daunia (*Daunian matt-painted pottery*) and its distribution in the northern Adriatic regions of the Balkan peninsula.

The candidate deserves praise for having provided all the basic elements required for a systematic approach to the study of this type of pottery and its distribution, and to the interpretation of the relationships between the inhabitants of the two shores of the Adriatic during the Iron Age. The dissertation is an indispensable tool for finding relevant information in the extensive bibliography written on this topic published in articles and monographs written in Italian, Croatian, Slovenian, German, English and French and therefore difficult to comprehend. Yet there is another important argument in this student’s favour; the passion and involvement that she shows towards the subject of study.

Lucilla Barresi begins her dissertation with a long and useful *excursus*, by putting forward hypotheses concerning the data obtained from literary and archaeological sources that are required for identifying a clear interpretative framework and addressing the comments expressed on Daunia and Daunian geometric pottery in various studies published in recent years. Therefore in the first section Lucilla Barresi reflects on the Daunian population during the Iron age, the various types of settlement and necropoles, and on the presence of Geometric Daunian pottery in various contexts, following a *ratio*
based on the examination of documentation obtained from literary sources and material evidence in an original way, bearing in mind that, although they both reflect reality, they are formed according to their own laws, which differ greatly from one another. The candidate also deserves credit for having carried out an archaeological evaluation of the evidence found in scientific literature and on the results obtained from analyses carried out in previous studies.

In the paragraphs dedicated to Daunian Geometric pottery (general characteristics and distribution), the formal stylistic analysis that was developed by De Juliis and Yntema for determining classes, types and variants and timelines, and for identifying and locating the production sites, enabled the candidate to study the distribution of the Daunian ceramic relics found in Istriia, Slovenia, Liburnia and central Dalmatia diachronically. Moreover, the summary of the general characteristics of ceramic class maintains that the high level of quality of the pottery confirms the existence of specialist potters who handed down their technical skills from generation to generation and "may explain why the most aesthetically beautiful geometric pottery of contemporary Southern Italian ceramic production was produced in Daunia during the seventh and sixth centuries B.C."

One of Lucilla Barresi's particular areas of interest were the decorations applied to Daunian ceramics: her knowledgeable and articulate interpretive work - which shows her ability to phase, connect and merge her philological wisdom and historical and cultural reconstruction and intuition – derives from the patient identification of vase iconographic apparatus which is often similar to that engraved on Daunian marble stele or that found on personal ornamental accessories made of metal or other materials. She has organized the set of decorative motifs according to both their intrinsic knowledge and the superstructural interpretation (symbolic, funerary, cultural) of the Daunian society that produced and used these materials.

The origins and modes of transmission of the iconographies analysed remain unsolved and require further investigation. The various theories on the subject developed in recent years (De Juliis, Bouzek, Yntema, etc.) are presented in a homogeneous and detailed manner. Lucilla Barresi intuitively rejects the possibility that the strong similarities observed between the geometric motifs painted on Daunian vases and those found on the pottery made in Albania, Macedonia, north-western Greece and the Phrygian-Anatolian area may be mere coincidences, and is more inclined towards J. Bouzek's theory concerning the existence of "una stoiné stilistica di tipo geometrico, svilupparsi all'inizio dell'età del ferro, all'interno della quale si sarebbero diffusi motivi decorativi geometrici
simili". In this regard, it would be preferable to know more than what has been done anyway, which direction Lucilla Barresi’s reconstructive hypothesis is taking, bearing in mind that the formulation of possible hypotheses, even when they may appear to be "unripe" compared to successive theories, should be aimed at widening scientific debate.

The final documentary appendix concerning the cataloguing of Istrian and Slovenian geometric pottery is of utmost importance, as it presents numerous unpublished artefacts listed on 112 technical data sheets. The presentation of the materials that the candidate carefully and expertly presents according to the various discovery sites thus providing useful information on circulation, is organized in a digital cataloguing system that allows for the easy processing and management of data, which focuses on the relics recovered during the excavations and systematic research carried out since the mid-nineteenth century, especially in areas of the necropoles (Nesazio, Pola, Rovigno, Casteliere di Leme, etc.).

The dissertation is complemented by an extensive and updated bibliography and remarkable cartographic and iconographic information. However there are some limitations since some of the authors (De Juliis, Galeandro, Palmentola 2006; Castoldi 2006) who are cited in the footnotes have not been included in the bibliography; I would suggest to insert also indexes concerning literary sources, names, places and remarkable objects, useful for easily finding the treated themes and topics.

Lucilla Barresi’s study is an encouraging step of the entire historical reconstruction process in which various scholars are still engaged today (De Juliis, Yntema, Castoldi, De La Genière, Ferranti, Kleibrink, to name but a few), who are carrying out numerous studies on the geometric pottery of southern Italy and who have explained how it is an excellent indicator of the social and cultural level of pre-Greek indigenous peoples.

The results obtained are very interesting and provide us with a clearer concept on previous studies and better understanding of the nature of the relationships between Daunia and the eastern Adriatic coast, the distribution vectors of Daunian geometric pottery and how it affected these territories.

The study is characterized by the precision of its methodological approach and clear and authoritative reasoning. In fact even if this research study uses data from a variety of sources, they are always analysed and reported correctly and they are accompanied by a detailed bibliography.

A limitation of which the candidate is fully aware is represented by the different level of in-depth analysis in the research of data for the Balkan regions covered in the study. It
would have preferable to use the same data collection and analysis methods for Liburnia and Dalmatia as those adopted for Istria, Dolenjska and Notranjska.

Without doubt the study provides an extensive and detailed analysis expressed with intelligence and competence; it fully addresses the objectives prefixed and clearly exposed by the candidate and befits this research field of great topicality and interest regarding Daumia ceramics and especially the trades and relationships involved in their production, the links and interference from other dimensions (political, ethnic, social, economic), transportation and distribution modes and other aspects.

The comments made above lead to a positive judgment, in hopes that the dissertation, with the necessary, minimal revisions, will be accepted for publication.

Prof. Armando Taliano Grasso

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