

Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΑΣ ΑΙΓΙΝΑΣ, 3000–1000 Π. Χ.

BY HANS WALTER (Η ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΕΝ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ 233; ΑΡΧΑΙΟΙ ΤΟΠΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ 28). PP. 173, FIGS. 148. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AT ATHENS, ATHENS 2004. €11. ISSN 1105-7785; ISBN 960-8145-37-6 (PAPER).

Kolonna is the most significant prehistoric settlement on the island of Aegina, and its supremacy among the archaeological sites in the Saronic Gulf remains until now indisputable. Thus, even if the book under review is entitled “The People of Ancient Aigina. 3000–1000 B.C.,” it deals exclusively with the people of Kolonna. The prehistoric remnants of Kolonna belong to 11 villages with a duration of two millennia. The long life of the settlement and its transformation into a sacred place in historical times resulted in a complicated plan difficult for nonspecialists to follow (whether they visit the site or not), even more so if they also have to cope with the finds, categorized according to the successive villages. Therefore, although there are several monographs (171) and numerous articles and papers about prehistoric and historic Kolonna, an extensive guidebook where at least the prehistoric material would be treated easily and comprehensively was imperative.

Hans Walter was the best choice to write this guide, since he was appointed by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences to direct the excavation there from 1966. His text addressed to a wide audience gives all the information needed and even more (he analyzes situations and meanings well known even to undergraduate students of prehistoric archaeology), and it is also useful for those scholars who are not familiar with the prehistoric era—although some of the author’s views (e.g., Minyan ware was the pottery of a nomadic people [78]) could not be sustained anymore. The Archaeological Society at Athens, which first, in 1894, conducted the excavations on the site, under the direction of Stais, undertook the publication of this guide. It was written in German (*Die Leute von Alt-Ägina* [Athens 2001]) and appeared together with an English version. Both books shared all

the advantages of the Archaeological Society’s publications.

Unfortunately, the Greek translation of Walter’s text represents an awkward moment in the long series of the Archaeological Society’s usually careful editions. The Greek version of the book has several mistakes, minor and major. Sometimes the word-for-word translation does not make any sense (e.g., 68), or the wrong word has been chosen, which changes the meaning of the text (e.g., “Ziegel” or “Lehmziegel” [32, 46] translated as bricks instead of mudbricks, and “Überzug” [40] translated as varnish instead of slip). For one to realize the size of the damage to the original text, the following are only a few of the most serious mistakes made: “ausgehenden Steinzeit” (the close of the Stone Age) translated as the end of the Paleolithic Age (32, 34), thus characterizing the first village at Kolonna as Paleolithic; “Erz” (58) as copper instead of ore or copper ore; “Tor-” or “Türpfanne” as joints of the door or gate instead of gatepost (or doorpost) socket; and “Schachtgräber” (shaft graves) at Mycenae (151) as cist tombs. Furthermore, as this book is addressed mainly to nonspecialists, all the mistakes will be assimilated without any hesitation by the readers.

It is obvious that a very long catalogue of errata must accompany the Greek translation of the book. The lesson taught by the failure of the Greek version of Walter’s book is that the translation of archaeological books should be made only by specialists.

NAYA SGOURITSA

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE HISTORY OF ART
UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
1576 84 ATHENS
GREECE
NSGOURIT@ARCH.UOA.GR