

AYIORGITIKÁ: THE 1928 EXCAVATIONS OF CARL BLEGEN AT A NEOLITHIC TO EARLY HELLADIC SETTLEMENT IN ARCADIA

BY SUSAN L. PETRAKIS (PREHISTORY MONOGRAPHS 3). PP. XII + 92, FIGS. 3, PLS. 40, MAP 1. INSTITUTE FOR AEGEAN PREHISTORY ACADEMIC PRESS, PHILADELPHIA 2002. \$93. ISBN 1-931534-01-2 (CLOTH).

In this Ph.D. dissertation, Petrakis has chosen to present a revision of the material from the 1928 Blegen excavations at the Neolithic and Early Helladic settlement at Ayioryitika. Blegen discovered the site in 1921 and excavated it in June and July of 1928 with the support of the University of Cincinnati under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies. A brief report was published that year. One of the objectives of this present monograph was to analyze and compare the finds from other, better-documented sites in order to place Ayioryitika in a "better archaeological and environmental context." This was attempted to a limited degree. The monograph is primarily a highly detailed catalogue of the finds, which include the pottery, the stone and bone artifacts, the ceramic artifacts, and the two burials. It also includes a brief presentation of the stratigraphy based on the recorded units.

Chapter 1 is a brief overview of the "Chronology," "Physical Environment," "Hydrology," "Modern Climate," "Vegetation," "Past Environments," "Communications," and a "Historical Summary of Ayioryitika and the Environs." However, this approach is too broad to cover the material in any depth. For instance, the sections on the physical environment and past environments could have benefited by referring to Runnels and Murray (*Greece Before History* [Standord 2001]).

Chapter 2 focuses on the "Stratigraphy" and "Architecture," with information that derives from the field notes kept by the excavators and drawn plans. Descriptions are based on

the original excavation summaries categorized by trenches and associated units. The brief section on the architecture also presents a summary of the remains found at the site. A good attempt was made to reinterpret the stratigraphic remains, despite the unfortunate case where the pottery could not be linked to their specific stratigraphic units and architectural features.

The following chapters 3 and 4 detail the "Pottery" and the "Stone and Bone Artifacts," respectively. The pottery ranges from Early/Middle Neolithic to Early Helladic II. This chapter is in the form of a catalogue with minimal interpretation because for most of the pottery the context is unknown. However, there is a detailed presentation of each type that includes an overall clay analysis and information about the slip and decoration where present.

Chapter 5 then presents an inventory of the "Ceramic Artifacts," which include terracotta figurines, sling missiles, spoons, reused sherds, and cylindrical artifacts that the original notebooks term "standards." It is unfortunate that most of the terracotta figurines are now lost, and therefore illustrations of them and their dimensions are either missing or not recorded. This has subsequently limited any further analysis or interpretation.

Finally, chapter 6 presents the recorded information about the two burials from the site. The format of the description is based on the original information and could not be improved by modern methodological approaches. Once again, the small sample and

lost material do not allow for any detailed interpretation to be made. Chapter 7 provides conclusions that are of a broad nature.

This monograph carefully and under relatively difficult circumstances brings together all the available material from the notebooks and plans. Cautious interpretations have been made because the author was “limited by the nature of the evidence,” which is based on “scattered and partial information.” The general impression of this book is that it presents a revision of the existing material without building upon it or presenting a new approach to the interpretation of the site. This is shown by the solitary graph in the monograph that does not contain a legend, and the original photographs and site plans that are in general of a poor quality—

could they not have been supplemented by new photographs and redrawn plans of better quality? The bibliography is limited and has not been greatly revised; it includes only one more recent publication from 2000. Despite the limitations and difficulties that had to be overcome to produce this monograph, it does provide improved access to most of the material from the site for future research.

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