

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

VERDAN (S.) **Eretria: fouilles et recherches, XXII. Le sanctuaire d'Apollon Daphnéphoros à l'époque géométrique** (École suisse d'archéologie en Grèce). Gollion: Infolio éditions, 2013. Pp. 286 + 182 (2 vols), illus. Sw. fr. 132/€80. 9782884-744119.

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The last decade has seen a flurry of definitive publications on Geometric Eretria by younger members of the Swiss School in Greece (*Eretria* XIV, XVII, XX, XXII) and these have placed our understanding of the site on a much firmer footing. This volume represents the final publication of the earliest phases of the sanctuary underlying the later Temple of Apollo Daphnephoros and specifically deals with the chronological development of the sacred area in the Middle and Late Geometric periods, as well as offering an overview of the discoveries made at the site by Swiss archaeologists from 1964–2003. A history of the earlier explorations at the site, going back to 1834, is presented in the introduction (27–35), not least the discovery of The temple of Apollo by Konstantinos Kourouniotis (1899–1911), as well as the investigations of Ioanna Konstantinou (1952–1956). The work of the Swiss School at the site is presented under several headings, beginning with the first interventions (1964–1968), followed by Claude Bérard's interventions (1970–1973), the discovery and excavation of the 'aire sacrificielle' by Antoinette Altherr-Charon (1978–1981), a summary of the changing interpretations of the site in the 1980s and 1990s, and concluding with the excavations north and south of the temple by Sandrine Huber (1990–1993) and Verdan (1998–2003).

The volume proceeds methodically, beginning with chapter 1 (37–63) in which the buildings and stratigraphy are fully presented. Although the earliest finds extend back to the Early Helladic II period, these were separated from the Early Iron Age levels by thick layers of clay indicating the presence of a marsh. The first clear sign of use of the area in later times is provided by a Sub-

Protogeometric II tomb, although little else is known of the contemporary settlement. The sanctuary itself first appears at a time roughly contemporary with Middle Geometric II and the beginning of Late Geometric I (middle and first half of the eighth century). This first phase saw the construction of several buildings surrounded by walls, as well as an altar. In the second phase (Late Geometric I–II) the area was reorganized, with at least two buildings disappearing and two others either continuing in use or being rebuilt. The most salient feature of this phase was the construction of the monumental Edifice 2, which was oriented toward the altar. In the third and final Early Iron Age phase (dated to *ca.* 700 BC), the buildings surrounding Edifice 2 disappeared and a few years later the building itself was destroyed by fire.

The next three chapters (2–4) deal with the pottery. In chapter 2 (65–94), the main pottery groups are presented contextually and in chronological order. In chapter 3 (95–107), Verdan cogently focuses on several qualitative aspects of the pottery, beginning with the imports (Attic, Corinthian, East Greek, Cypriot, 'Argive monochrome', as well as transport amphorae from eastern Greece, the Cyclades, the northern Aegean, Cyprus and Phoenicia). He then discusses the decorated pottery and that with inscriptions – inscriptions made before and after firing, in alphabetic and non-alphabetic forms, in Greek and Semitic. The chapter ends with an account of the use of the pottery (repair, reuse, destruction). The pottery itself is catalogued in volume 2 (7–21). Among the imports, is a fragment (no. 19) which is clearly Athenian and Late Protogeometric. A full quantitative analysis of the pottery is presented in chapter 4 (109–23), where a development of the material across the three phases is presented.

Small finds other than pottery are presented in chapter 5 (125–43) and catalogued in volume 2 (23–29). There is an impressive variety of objects in bronze, iron, gold and silver, as well as glass, faience, bone/ivory, stone and terracotta. Among other things, the material includes horse trappings (not least a magnificent Oriental bronze example, no. 391, replete with an Aramaic inscription discovered by Kourouniotis), figurines, items of personal ornament, tools (including a cheese-grater,

rather than a strainer, no. 402), weapons, spindle-whorls, beads or buttons, and likely stone weights.

Chapter 6 (145–51) is an important study of the metalworking debris found in abundance in the sanctuary. It includes fragments of crucibles, tuyères and moulds, as well as bronze and iron slag, the former evidence of bronze-casting, the latter primarily from hearths used for ironworking. The chapter also deals with fragments of vessels reused for melting gold (see also Appendix 4 by N.D. Meeks and P.T. Craddock on a scientific examination of the sherds with gold particles).

Chapter 7 (153–72) deals with the spatial organization of the sanctuary, as well as the architecture and construction techniques. Chapter 8 (173–98) focuses on the ‘emergence of the sanctuary’, whereas chapter 9 (199–229) begins with an overview of the development of the sanctuary and includes discussion of the function of its spaces, rituals and the human participants. There is much to commend these three chapters. Among other things, Verdan critically but diplomatically goes back to earlier interpretations, especially those of Bérard and A. Mazarakis Ainian, points to shortcomings, particularly in that of the latter, and presents an interpretation that is a

‘must-read’ for anyone interested in Geometric architecture.

In the conclusion (231–40), Verdan returns to the issue of the identity of the deity of the sanctuary (for which there is no definitive evidence), looks at alternatives and concludes, judiciously, that it should be Apollo Daphnephoros. Verdan’s text is followed by several appendices: the first dealing with the terrestrial animal bones recovered from the site (by Huber and P. Méniel, 243–54), the second on the marine fauna (by T. Theodoropoulou, 255–66), the third on the archaeobotanical remains (by E. Margaritis, 267–69) and the fourth, already noted, on the sherds with gold particles. In addition to the catalogues, volume 2 presents the illustrations of the excavations, architecture and small finds, all of excellent quality.

There is little doubt that this volume will quickly take its place as a seminal study, not only of the Geometric sanctuary at Eretria, but as one that is important for the Geometric period as a whole.

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