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ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

ETIENNE (R.), KOUROU (N.) and SEMANTONI-BOURNIA (E.) **Η αρχαία Τήνος**. Athens: Ίδρυμα Τηνιακού Πολιτισμού, 2013. Pp. 183, illus. €30. 9789609915946.

Tenos is not perhaps one of the best-known Cycladic islands. While the island is the site of one of the most famous Orthodox Christian pilgrimages (to the Panagia of Tenos on the 15th of August), its ancient history is not well known, and its archaeological remains, including the impressive Sanctuary of Poseidon and Amphitrite, are largely outside any Aegean island itinerary. It is therefore extremely fortunate that the Institute of Tenian Culture decided to publish this excellent little volume, written by three of the foremost experts on Tenian history and archaeology.

The volume serves two functions: firstly, it is an introduction to the history and archaeology of the island of Tenos from the Bronze Age until late antiquity; secondly it is an up-to-date and succinct summary of the state of recent archaeological research on the island. An extensive summary in French (160–83) will hopefully make the contents of the book approachable to a wider audience.

The introduction is a comprehensive presentation of early accounts of Tenos (such as by European travellers during the 17th–19th centuries, by Semantoni-Bournia) and of the history of archaeological research on the island (Kourou). Part 1 is a short account of the geography of Tenos and of ancient references to the landscape, climate and vegetation (Etienne). Part 2 is a narrative of the history of the island, from the prehistoric period till the Archaic period (Kourou) and from the Classical till the Roman period (Etienne). Part 3 discusses the myths associated with Tenos (Kourou) and the religious pantheon of the island, with particular reference to the spectacular iconography of Tenian relief pottery (Semantoni-Bournia). The heart of the book is really part 4, which is the presentation of the Tenian archaeological evidence. The emphasis is undoubtedly on the Geometric, Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods, when the evidence is richer and, consequently, a thematic discussion can be introduced.

Highlights of the archaeological presentation include the excellent discussion of the fascinating site of Xobourgo (Kourou), an early Geometric defensive site that became the later Archaic *polis* of Tenos until its relocation to a coastal site in the

third quarter of the fourth century. Kourou identifies building E, outside the Cyclopean wall of Xobourgo, as a civic building, possibly a prytaneion. Xobourgo also had an active Thesmophorion from the eighth century, which possibly housed the cult of a female Potnia deity before her later identification with Demeter. Another Tenian peculiarity is the presence of stone pebbles from the shore on top of burial pits used for cult. This is linked by Kourou to the purification role of the sea in ritual. Semantoni-Bournia offers us a superb summary of the fascinating relief pottery of Tenos, from the middle of the eighth century and throughout the seventh (98–122). These Tenian pithamphorae are characterized by their spectacular iconography, which includes mythical subjects. Perhaps the most famous specimen of this type of pottery is the pithamphora from Mykonos (now in the Mykonos museum), with its depiction of scenes from the sack of Troy and of the Trojan horse on the neck. Semantoni-Bournia rightly argues that such spectacular pottery cannot be viewed as an imitation on a poorer material (pottery) of art achieved on more precious materials (such as metal), but rather should be seen as an artistic achievement in its own right. Finally, Etienne turns his attention to the Classical and Hellenistic evidence. He discusses fortifications, the presence of towers (which are, in some ways, a typical island feature), the structure of Tenian society (on the basis of inscriptions) and, finally, the Sanctuary of Poseidon and Amphitrite, used from the middle of the fourth century, but properly monumentalized only from the end of that century. The dedication of the sanctuary to these two gods is a peculiarity, while the early phase of its monumentalization can be linked with Macedonian initiatives, most probably that of Demetrius Poliorketes.

There is no doubt that the Tenian literary (mostly epigraphic) sources and archaeological evidence give us glimpses of a fascinating history of the island and its people. I regret the absence of a better map (map 1 at 26 is the only map of the entire island in the book and it is incredibly difficult to read); but this is a small criticism of an otherwise excellent volume, which will hopefully allow the history and archaeology of Tenos to be introduced into more mainstream accounts.

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