decorated monument of early Augustan date has long been put forward by Erika Simon: it is the base of a statue of Hercules standing under a canopy that was supported by four columns, their capitals decorated with the hero's lion-skin (Helbig III4 113 no. 2190; 213 no. 2297).

The two very short chapters which follow the catalogue add little to our knowledge. The first (pp. 137-140) includes a few summary—and one is tempted to say simplistic—remarks on the symbolic significance of the decoration; birds, for instance, represent the soul of the dead (p. 139), the griffin alludes to his or her apotheosis (p. 138). In the second (pp. 141-142) C. gives a list of 15 workshops ('officine lapidarie') to which she attributes a number of altars and cippi. Suffice to remark that most of her so-called workshops consist of no more than two pieces.

Finally, the indices where one finds the same combination of usefulness and lost opportunities so characteristic of the whole book. The first, of persons (pp. 143-145), is chaotic (see on this P. Herz, Gymnasium 87, 1980, 463). On the other hand, those of proveniences (pp. 147-148) and of the decorative motifs (pp. 149-157) are most helpful. But in a work that deals mainly with inscribed monuments, one might also have expected an index of inscriptions.

J-P. Descoeudres


Well produced as regards both text and illustrations this first ΣΙΚΕΛΙΚΑ volume augurs well for the series which is published by the Centro siciliano di studi storico-archeologici 'Biagio Pace' under the direction of Nicola Bonacasa. It is the long-awaited publication of one of Sicily's main prehistoric sites, the famous 'Cave of the Old Man', situated near Petralia Sottana in the province of Palermo (ca. 30 km south of Cefalù), overlooking the valley of the Imera meridionale.

The archaeological exploration of the fabled grotto started in 1936, and in 1937 the first excavation campaign took place under P. Mingazzini, the then director of the museum at Palermo. In the following year a
second—and final—campaign was conducted by his successor, J. Bovio Marconi. Soon afterwards, the war put an abrupt end to the preparatory work for the publication, and the complete reorganisation of the museum at Palermo and the archaeological service of Sicily that took place in the post-war years, as well as JBM’s commitments in the huge Selinus project led to further delays. But one readily agrees with his ‘better late than never’ (p. 3) and is even tempted to add: ‘all’s well that ends well’.

The first of the three main parts into which the book is subdivided gives a description of the ca. 85 m long cave (plan and section by G. Mannino who undertook some further exploration in 1961 and 1966) and an excellent account of the history of research (pp. 1-22). The second deals with the finds which consist mainly of pottery fragments (pp. 23-97). Because of the lack of any observable stratigraphy in the cave they are classified by wares and types. Among the Neolithic pottery the slipped ware is most abundant, while the presence of fragments belonging to the so-called Diana style is particularly noteworthy. A large number of wares can be attributed to the Chalcolithic (among which one notes in particular: an abundantly represented local variety of the so-called Serraferlicchio ware, 3 fragments of a ‘white-on-black’ ware and, belonging to the last Chalcolithic phase, numerous pieces of the so-called Malpasso ware), while the Bronze Age is only represented by some Castelluccio pottery. In his conclusions (pp. 99-108) JBM paints a fascinating picture of the cave’s history. It was used—as a dwelling, not as a sacred site as Mingazzini had assumed—from the Epipaleolithic to the Early Bronze Age, perhaps with some interruptions. That its inhabitants had contacts with the people of the Palermo region as well as with the south and the west coasts is perhaps less surprising than it sounds if one considers its favourable geographical position which gives direct access to one of the main natural routes across the island—nowadays followed by the autostrada Termini Imerese-Enna-Catania.

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