

Preface by the Series Editor

The 93rd volume of the series *Mitteilungen der Prähistorischen Kommission* (MPK) represents the comprehensive study on “Dynamics of Neolithisation in South-eastern Europe. The Beginnings of Agriculture, Husbandry and Sedentary Life” by Raiko Krauß. The author is a well-known expert on both the archaeology of south-eastern Europe and the neolithisation process, which he has been actively investigating for decades in manifold projects and fieldwork in different areas of the Balkans. This book not only includes lots of newly gained data and results, but also offers his views on the topic based on his expertise and long-term experience in this field. The long overdue focus on the south-eastern European Neolithic and associated dynamics during the transformation process turns the spotlight on a crucial zone where most of the cultural impact for the Neolithic of the continent is rooted. Understanding the entire region as an archaeological entity in its own right, worth studying from micro- to macro-regional levels, goes beyond its frequent attribution in archaeology as a bridging, transmitting or bordering area between western Asia and continental Europe.

The main chapters of this book offer systematic and in-depth data and materials organised in geographical order, covering the northern Aegean, North Macedonia and the Struma Valley, Thrace, the Central Balkans, the Lower Danube, the Carpathian Basin and the north-western Pontic area. In this thorough compilation, old and new data are contextualised in their regional-specific environments and research trajectories, accompanied by the author’s perspective on their specific role and impact within the neolithisation process. This assembly of multilingual literature and facts from various countries offers a new source of reference for future studies by experts and students. The conceptual and theoretical background of the book is outlined in its

introductory chapter, discussing the roots, perception and changes of the ‘Neolithic’ and of the region in the archaeological discourse since the 19th century. The collection, modelling and interpretation of the radiocarbon data includes supporting illustrations and maps and represents an important additional new source that allows us to expect follow-up discussions. The concluding chapter on the cultural legacy contains interesting and stimulating thoughts on specific aspects and practices of the neolithisation process. Although neolithisation and the region in focus are a highly dynamic research field, constantly producing new primary data, this book by R. Krauß will likely serve as a key study for south-east European archaeology.

Incorporating this book in our MPK publication series continues the tradition of the long-term significance of Balkan archaeology at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and our well-established focus on the archaeology of central and south-eastern Europe. My sincere thanks go to Raiko Krauß for sharing his expertise, studies and data about the dynamics of neolithisation in south-eastern Europe. Financial support for the publication has been provided by the Heisenberg Programme of the German Research Foundation (DFG). Ulrike Schuh was responsible for the publication management, Hazel Harrison for the English language editing, and Angela Schwab for the layout. I warmly thank our OeAI team for their thorough work and engagement, as well as the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press for their continuous support in producing the MPK series.

Barbara Horejs
Scientific director
of the Austrian Archaeological Institute
Vienna, 17th September 2023