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**BIRGIT ÖHLINGER, Ritual und Religion im archaischen Sizilien. Formations- und Transformationsprozesse binnenländischer Kultorte im Kontext kultureller Kontakte.** Italiká volume 4. Reichert, Wiesbaden 2016. € 88.00. ISBN 978-3-95490-152-4. 288 pages, 46 coloured and 59 b/w illustrations, 47 plates.

In her in-depth study of the rich archaeological record of ritual contexts of inland settlements of Archaic Sicily, submitted as PhD thesis to the University of Innsbruck, the author of this prize-winning book takes an explicit methodological approach towards her subject in the vein of Anthony F. C. WALLACE's definition of ritual as 'religion in action' as expounded in his "Religion. An Anthropological View" (New York 1966) (unfortunately on p. 20 confounded by the author implying that 'religion' would be 'ritual in action'). The solid basis of B. Öhlinger's study is the 'thick description' (*sensu* C. Geertz), reconstruction (in the sense of assembling the excavation information to serve a comparative format) and interpretation of 16 ceremonial / ritual contexts dating from the Archaic period (and before). Rather than viewing the evidence *a priori* in the context of the Greek colonial world, the author's point of departure is the inland context of the indigenous Iron Age communities and how these over time interacted with and related to the coastal world of the Greek colonies. This is an important methodological choice as it allows B. Öhlinger to interpret her data relatively unbiased from the still strong Greek colonial ideology that pervades Classical scholarship, concentrating instead on the more anthropologically inspired approach of Italian protohistory and the theoretical concepts and thinking of German-language and Anglo-Saxon authors. Her approach results in the disclosing and closely monitoring of architectural and artefactual indicators that, while pointing to cultural transmission between Greek coastal communities and inland indigenous communities, should not be interpreted as uni-directional colonial influence. While without doubt a strong point in her work, this is not a new or surprising approach and to my mind it is the innovative interpretation of the archaeological record in terms of ritual behaviour that is the true merit of this publication.

The publication starts out with an accessible chapter on theory and praxis of religion and ritual from the broad disciplinary perspective of anthropology and sociology to create a conceptual framework within which archaeological data pertaining to religion and ritual may be interpreted. At the same time this first chapter (pp. 11–29) serves to point out the limitations the author will have to work with, her study being totally reliant on material remains. This is where methodology comes in and where the author takes recourse to F. C. Wallace who described as far back as 1966 a list of categories of religious behaviour which B. Öhlinger in her table 1 links to Colin RENFREW's list of expressions of material culture reflecting ritual functions (The Archaeology of Cult. The Sanctuary at Phylakopi. British School Arch. Athens, Suppl. 18 [London 1985]). While framed by ample theoretical and methodological considerations, it is basically these two authors that lead the way to the author's "Analysekategorien einer Religionsarchäologie" (p. 24) that will form the backbone of her study (overview in table 1). Her categories comprise of 1) setting and topography, 2) locality as the place of ritual action, 3) presence of a cult image (natural or man-made), 4) offering gear and votive gifts, 5) natural objects (animal bones, food and drink indicators, "Rauchopfer"), 6) cult participants and actors.

Chapter II (pp. 30–54) then describes the specific archaeological context of 6<sup>th</sup> century BC Sicily as a dynamic cultural entity which cannot simply be captured in straightforward binary terms of ‘Greek’ and ‘Indigenous’ but would have been characterised by various forms of culture contact and exchange in which the meaning of transferred objects or concepts may change in the new societal context. Just as the Phoenician and Greek communities and their material cultures as found on the coasts of Sicily were the outcome of multifarious contacts, also the inland Sicilian cultures cannot be caught in ethnic terms of the historically known inland peoples (Elymians, Sikani and Sicels) with ‘matching’ cultural expressions. The author’s review, in the first two sections of this chapter, of the various colonial and post-colonial theoretical approaches that have tried to tackle the problem of the nature of culture contact (with ample discussion of concepts such as ‘hybridity’, ‘third space’ and ‘middle ground’) therefore all seem to reinforce the underlying idea that it is *the analysis of the material culture itself viewed in its proper context* that can give answers to archaeological questions on culture contact, in this case in the context of the archaeology of religion and ritual. I note here that despite the emphasis in the introduction on theories of culture contact, it is the systematic analysis of cult environments and cult practices at inland Sicilian settlements that is the strongest asset of this publication linked as these are to a social archaeological interpretive approach and thorough study of the changing material culture.

In this material approach two concepts play a key role. One is the notion of ‘consumption-scape’, as used by Gülléz GER and Russel W. BELK in their article “I’d like to buy the world a coke. Consumptionscapes of the ‘less affluent world’” (Journal of Consumer Policy 19, 1996, 271–304), which in the context of this study can be defined as prescribed consumerism in the context of ritual feasting at specific localities that archaeologically can be traced by uncovering and studying ‘ceremonial trash’, i. e. the material remains of social feasting (commensality) produced by ritual behaviour. The other is the specific social and spatial organisation of inland Sicilian settlement in ‘compounds’ (agglomerations of roundhouses). In section 3 of chapter II (pp. 47–54) the author introduces the reader to the social organisation of Iron Age Sicilian inland settlement that would have had the form of extended families living in these compounds, i. e. complex forms of social and spatial settlement organisation within which the cultic environments presented in the case studies in chapter III should be understood.

In chapter III (pp. 55–158) the author then presents her catalogue of Sicily’s inland sites structured along the lines of her “Analysekategorien einer Religionsarchäologie”. The corpus of 16 sites offers the empirical data on which the interpretation of cult practices in chapter IV (pp. 159–194) is based. In the introduction to chapter III, in sections 1 and 2 (“Umsetzung des methodischen Konzepts” [p. 55] and “Aufbau der Fallstudien” [pp. 56–57] respectively) the key concepts of the author’s agency based archaeology of religion are further introduced and presented as part of her methodological approach to the actual archaeology of cult places of inland Sicily. The standardised descriptive criteria allow comparison between cult places in their local settlement context and while the ‘thick description’, as expected, highlights local specificities and variability in architectural expression and find assemblages, on a higher level B. Öhlinger’s systematic approach also reveals patterning regarding the chronology of changes in the material record that are related to cultural influences from the coastal settlements.

The most obvious of these influences is the gradual introduction of new architectural forms that the inhabitants of the inland settlements adopt in their cult places and the appearance of Greek imported pottery among the indigenous votive gifts and cult gear. Alongside the traditional Iron Age roundhouses that persist in the Archaic period now so-called *oikoi*, cult houses with stone foundations and a rectangular plan, appear alongside architectural forms that serve cult practices, such as *bothroi* and *temenoi*. On the artefactual level Greek terracotta statuettes and Greek vases are

now recorded among the artefacts associated with ceremonial and cultic behaviour. The author's precise and full inventory of the 16 sites with ample references to the literature and phased plans of excavated settlements has resulted in a corpus of knowledge on inland Sicily that will be useful for other study purposes as well. The author is to be commended for bringing all this material together.

Chapter IV (pp. 159–194) contains the final analysis of the empirical data presented in chapter III based on the author's theoretical and methodological considerations outlined in chapters I and II. The left column of table 4 presents the structure of this chapter according to three of F. C. Wallace's categories of religious behaviour: a) offering, b) feasts, c) ritual gatherings and cult buildings. For all three categories the catalogue offers material correlates as presented in the right column of that table. I will briefly review all three categories and their material correlates.

As material correlates for offering B. Öhlinger lists 1) ritual deposits, 2) offering gifts, votives and remains of animal offerings and 3) offering installations both fixed and mobile (*arulae*), benches and fireplaces. A first conclusion the author draws is that ritual deposition dominates the cultic archaeological record at inland sites. Functional analysis of these deposits may furnish insight in particular forms of offering and their societal embedding that in turn can be compared with cult practices in the Greek coastal settlements. To this end the author describes the various forms of ritual deposits (with and without architectural enclosure and various modes of above ground display) and the nature of the objects found (entire objects, intentionally fragmented, *pars pro toto*, absence or presence of animal bones as indicators of animal offerings and ashes). Some of the assemblages clearly indicate food and drink offerings. The latter deposits are evidently different from those that are characterised by votive gifts, i. e. objects specifically made for dedication, such as the hut and house models and animal statuettes. Among these interesting bowls occur with zoomorphological appliques (mainly cattle) indicative of the importance of cattle in daily life, in ceremonial feasting and in cult offerings. Anthropomorphological objects, although found at several settlements, occur less often. Like the symbolic representations of cattle also the frequently found hut models (with and without cattle appliques) should be interpreted as symbols that, according to the author, refer to the function of (specific) roundhouses as "Festhäuser". Interestingly these models are often found in *oikoi* while vice versa there is an example of an *oikos* model found in a roundhouse.

Ceremonial / ritual meals are, according to the author, strongly rooted in the Bronze Age and Iron Age cultures of Sicily and this remained so in the Archaic period, be it that objects from outside started to play a role. Dedication of votive gifts played a minor role and is hardly known from the roundhouses. It is only with the introduction of the *oikoi* that votives increase in number. However, it should be noted that contexts pointing at ceremonial / ritual meals are also known from coastal Greek contexts and rather than as an ethnic indicator, the phenomenon should be viewed as a general ritual practice well-known from anthropological research. But while in Greek contexts deposits of offering meals found in *bothroi* can somewhat easier be connected with chthonic powers (Demeter, Kore), such contextual knowledge is not available for the inland indigenous settlements. Finally the author points to the selective adoption of Greek imports in the local ceramic cult repertoire with likely an altered meaning and notes that among the local pottery very traditional shapes continued to be in use.

As material correlates for feast, the author mentions remains from animal offerings in the form of animal bones, large areas with ceremonial trash, fire places and remains of ash in cult context.

Commensality is a topic that of recent enjoys quite some attention in archaeological studies and is aptly described by B. Öhlinger as an "anthropologische Konstante". Feasting is instrumental in building reciprocal relationships and in turning economic into social and symbolic capital (*sensu*

Bourdieu). The material culture of ritual feasting comprises of transport, storing, preparations, handing out and consumption of foodstuffs (especially meat) and drinks. This is in the inland cult places archaeologically reflected in ashes and charcoal, fire places, roasting equipment, pottery and animal bones. The author connects the remains of animal bones to ritual slaughtering of mainly cattle (this in light of the zoological analyses and the representations of cattle in terracotta form), although also other animal species are represented (sheep / goat, pig). As the exact place where slaughtering took place can hardly ever be traced, it is the areas with ‘ceremonial trash’ – that at some sites are quite substantial – that provide the evidence for such gatherings. This could take place within the area of the compound or in an open area outside it and would have taken place according to set rules with respect to who could do the slaughtering while the distribution of the meat would have been ‘ranked’, as is known from anthropological examples. Evidence of such gatherings in funerary areas are also known. Good data on what alcoholic drinks were kept and served in the local and imported vases fail as of yet but the general idea on basis of the ceramic finds is that this would have been local beer and later also imported wine. Feasting would have had multiple functions, among which self-representation by socially high ranking persons and families, socio-political bonding, veneration of ancestors and other transcendental powers.

As material correlates for ritual gatherings and cult buildings, the author mentions specific places in nature that are marked out by ritual deposits, specific buildings – cult buildings, which on account of their outstanding architecture or ritual deposits can be interpreted as such – and finally, altars in the vicinity of buildings.

The goal of this section is to investigate how ceremonial / ritual space was given shape and what the endogenous and exogenous factors were in the transformation of cultic areas. From the map in fig. 89 it is clear that in the Archaic period at most inland settlements *oikoi* appeared, at a few others roundhouses existed alongside *oikoi*, while at a few sites roundhouses continued to be the standard for cult places. This is not to say that structures with rectangular plans were unknown in indigenous contexts; in fact the inland settlements were from the Bronze Age on characterised by a mixture of structures with oval, round or rectangular plans “die sich zu *compounds*, einer Art weilerartiger Gehöfte, zusammenschlossen” (p. 179). The compound as ‘house’ would have been central to the community embodied by a specific, often large roundhouse that would have functioned as the ritual and spiritual gathering place having strong connotations with forebears. Ritual deposits of animal bones and ceramics found in such buildings would indicate their importance as places where ceremonial meals were consumed. Such buildings had an average surface of 50–80 m<sup>2</sup> (be it with substantial variability). Their special symbolic meaning is expressed both in the terracotta roundhouse models and in the fact that many are characterised by phases of renewal and rebuilding.

In the course of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC significant changes occur in the material record in the form of Greek and Phoenician pottery wares and a changing settlement architecture characterised by multi-cellular buildings with a more or less rectangular plan but variable as to size and architectural embellishments. Within this new constellation, cult buildings appear having a rectangular plan and at times adorned with terracottas, *akroteria* and painted entablatures. When associated with ‘ceremonial trash’, these *oikoi* can at times be very convincingly interpreted as banqueting facilities in which important persons would have feasted with the more regular community members feasting outside in the open. Such ritual gatherings were according to the author rooted in previous practices. The *oikoi*, both with and without architectural embellishment, are, according to the author, not likely to have been aimed at housing cult images of venerated gods and are therefore no “Enklaven griechischer Kulte mitten in indigenen Kulturgefügen” (p. 189). Rather does she connect indigenous cult also for the Archaic period with a continued form of (centralised)

ancestor veneration. In contrast with the central functions of altars in the Greek world, the altars that have been found in inland contexts do not seem to have fulfilled such a central function. In fact full-blown Greek temple complexes are only found on important nodes in the inland infrastructural network and would have been important meeting places where all kinds of knowledge and goods were exchanged and political relationships forged. The presence of Greek architects and craftsmen at these places is more than likely.

The observed changes in material culture are, according to the author, nonetheless indicative of social and cultural change adding up to nothing less than a “Neue Welt” (p. 182) in which traditional lifeways and ritual behaviour had changed profoundly. Besides the evidence for physical changes in the settlement organisation, this is also substantiated by new funerary rites from as early as the start of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (from multiple depositions in chamber tombs to individual fosa-type graves, *enchytrismos* graves and sarcophagi, although their introduction was variable over time and space). The author describes the pace of changes in material culture, however, as “langsame Veränderung der sozialen Strukturen” (p. 186) but eventually leading to the breaking up of the extended families of the Iron Age that had lived in the traditional compounds and a shift towards a social organisation based on the nuclear family. New material expressions did, however, not imply that tradition was outrooted, as adduced by the author in various telling examples. Old ‘compounds’ became venerated places and the author shows how the role of memory in the interpretation of the archaeological record loomed large. The mentality of keeping tradition in esteem while innovating is nicely captured in the characterisation “Sowohl-als-auch”. In regard to this the archaeological record of Monte Polizzello and Sabucina appear in the hands of the author to be exceptionally strong case studies to study this phenomenon. The author ends her insightful book emphasising the heterogeneity of the inland settlements and their cult places as well as the multi-layered reality of cultural exchange. “So lässt sich die alte Welt von der neu entstandenen Welt nicht klar trennen, genauso wie die Grenzen zwischen Tradition und Innovation ineinanderfließen” (p. 193).

This book is a must for all those who engage in the archaeological study of ‘Religion in Action’.

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**CHRISTIN KELLER, Die Rekonstruktion sozialer Gruppen der Hallstattzeit zwischen Enns und Donau. Eine statistische Analyse.** Berliner Archäologische Forschungen volume 14. Marie Leidorf, Rahden / Westf. 2015. € 49.80. ISBN 978-3-89646-524-5. 378 pages with 403 illustrations and 1 table, 1 CD-ROM.

One of the main features of the central European Early Iron Age is the widespread occurrence of sumptuous burials. Size, layout, and grave furniture of those funeral monuments were readily considered to be an ostentatious reflection of social inequality. A socio-archaeological focus was traditionally laid on research on the apparently homogeneous West Hallstatt zone, whereas the highly differentiated East Hallstatt zone (“Osthallstattkreis”) remained a field of regional studies. Christin Keller wants to counteract this inequality in her supra-regional evaluation of burial remains in the eastern Hallstatt zone and, according to the title, aims at “the reconstruction of Hallstatt period social groups between Enns and Danube” (all transl. H. Wendling). She explicitly pursues “a statistical analysis” similar to other, recently published works (C. STEFFEN, Gesellschaftswandel während