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Natascha Sojc (ed.), *Akragas. Current Issues in the Archaeology of a Sicilian Polis*. Archaeological Studies Leiden University 38. pp. 174, with 110 b/w and col. ills, incl. maps. Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2017. ISBN 978-9-087-28298-1, paperback €46.

In recent years research regarding Agrigento was the most intensive of all the ancient places in Sicily.¹ This resulted from the stimulating charisma of the Archaeological Park and its administration, as well as the *Soprintendenza*. Italian and international teams examined the architecture, urban planning, the newly found theatre, and the Roman and late

antique city. The Park and the Archaeological Museum have exhibited the results in museums for the public. In addition, archaeological surveys examined the ancient city² and its hinterland.³ Natascha Sojc, first affiliated to Leiden University and now to the University of Augsburg, carried out archaeological and geophysical surveys in the suburban sanctuary of S. Anna. This collaborative effort resulted in the present volume that is based on a colloquium.

Of the 12 contributions, 5 deal with the work from 2013 in the suburban sanctuary of S. Anna. They appear modestly at the end of the volume.

Sojc (pp. 129 – 137) reports on the 2013 survey, which uncovered rich ceramics on the plateau next to the excavation of the S. Anna sanctuary from the 1960s. Probably the sanctuary extended into this area. It existed from the end of the 6th and during the 5th century BC. Kenneth L. Kvamme (pp. 139-149) reports on an electromagnetic and georadar survey of the same area, in which architectural structures as well as metal objects, pits or small fireplaces are probable. However, the results of the two geophysical methods do not always completely overlap. Johanna Stöger (p. 151-157) describes the establishment of a georeferenced network in the study area by the Leiden 'ArcLand field school' for the surface survey and subsequent excavations. Finally, Linda Adorno gives an overview of the survey findings (pp. 159 – 170), reporting that 9600 finds were picked up on 2000m² (corresponding to 480 finds per 100m²!). The findings include Corinthian and especially Attic imported ceramics (see p. 133: 813 diagnostic Attic fragments), indigenous ceramics, terracotta figurines, loom weights and glass pearls. The quantitative composition confirms the statistical composition of the presumed sacred sites during our surveys in the surrounding areas of Gela, Camarina and the Monti Sicani.⁴ Fine and glazed ceramics clearly predominate after amphorae, coarse wares and roof tiles. The following excavations were able to explain this extreme concentration by dense votive depots. Sojc (p. 134 s.) explores the presence of indigenous ceramics through a differentiated interpretation of the evidence from the following excavations for the interaction between Greek and native peoples.

Caterina Trombi (pp. 95-107) contributes important finds from the older excavations in the sanctuary of S. Anna, which she considers as a *thesmophorion* with

¹ Lepore and Calio 2021.

² Belvedere and Burgio 2012.

³ Bergemann 2020.

⁴ Bergemann 2020: 108-110, 133 s.; Bergemann 2010: 101 s., 136, 140-144.

the fertility cults of Demeter and Kore. She interprets the indigenous ceramics as votives of local women, who would have been of great importance for the integration of the predominantly male settlers. In contrast, Reine-Marie Bérard has pointed to the presence of women among the migrants coming from Greece based on literary sources and the necropolis of Megara Hyblaea.⁵ Holger Baitinger (pp. 109–125) examines bronzes from the older excavations, which often already came into the ground as fragments. Therefore, he proposes to interpret them neither as votive offerings nor as utilitarian objects, but as raw metal to be melted down and used as means of payment between culturally unequal partners.

Three contributions deal with other aspects of the sacred landscape of Agrigento. Monica de Cesare and Elisa Chiara Portale (pp. 81–94) cleaned and re-examined the small buildings in the sanctuary of Zeus Olympios. There is a small temple of the 6th century BC predating the colossal Olympieion. However, it already has the same orientation and therefore confirms a high dating of the urban grid of the city of Agrigento. The detailed chronological investigations also follow the monumentalization and redesign of its surroundings that followed the construction of the early classical Olympieion. Clemens Voigt (p. 51 – 64) reconstructs the altar of Temple L in the sanctuary of the chthonic deities differently from earlier attempts, without the *risalit* with a surrounding Doric frieze with metopes and triglyphs, based on the small triglyph altar in Selinunte. He dates it to around 460 BC. A map showing the location of Temple L and its altar would certainly have been helpful to readers less familiar with the topography of Agrigento! A reference to p. 38 fig. 2 and a legend there would also have been editorially possible.

Gianfranco Adornato (pp. 35–49) reconstructs the sacred landscape based on literary sources and archaeological finds, in the context of the early development of the city in the 6th century BC. Some of the sanctuaries along the southern city boundary appear to be slightly older than the city walls, constructed around 530 BC. This applies in particular to the sanctuaries of the chthonic deities and sacred places at Gates 5 and 1. The sanctuary of S. Biagio, on the other hand, has an indigenous tradition and cannot be an example of the transfer of cult practices from Crete, the provenance of part of the settlers in Agrigento's mother city, Gela. There was also a lack of artistic forms of Cretan provenance. On the other hand, iconographies that

derived from Corinthian models dominated the southern coast of Sicily, later also Eastern Greek models from Miletus and Samos, while Attica with its luxury ceramics did not enter the place until the end of the 6th century BC. Like other Greek *apoikiai*, Agrigento quickly detached itself from the influence of its mother city and became integrated into other, more diverse networks.

Maria Concetta Parelo (pp. 11–22) reports on new excavations in the east of the city along the main road I–L near Gate 2. Here the urban settlement developed as early as the turn of the 6th to 5th century BC. The quarter ceased to exist as early as the 4th century BC, probably because of a position endangered by watercourses and landslides. There was no Roman settlement activity in the area. Finally, Oscar Belvedere (p. 23 – 33) provides a global overview of the urban area and its surroundings through the complete survey of the Archaeological Park of Agrigento and its documentation in GIS by the University of Palermo. The aerial survey documented only about 50% of the structures from the 1958 survey, but a large number of new findings appeared from the archaeological survey. Outside the city walls there existed rural settlements from the Greek to the Byzantine phase.

Finally, two contributions on museology and dissemination round the volume off. Heinz Beste (pp. 65–80), who worked on the temple of Zeus Olympios as architectural researcher,⁶ presents a project on how to make his results visible to visitors to the Archaeological Park. However, he rejects the idea of raising one of the colossal supporting figures (Telamone). Donatella Magione (pp. 3–10) mentions recent strategies of the Museo Archeologico Regionale. Today it no longer receives the new finds from current excavations. On the other hand, it preserves an extremely rich treasure of material from Agrigento and southern Sicily to make them accessible to visitors, schools and, above all, researchers, so that the public can experience the research results through its permanent exhibition and exhibitions in a national and international context.

This very appealing volume has been produced with little effort and mostly well-printed images. Only some plans (p. 11 fig. 1; p. 26 fig. 2; p. 38 fig. 2) are too small in scale to read their legends.

Overall, Natascha Sojc has published an interesting book that not only contextualizes her own research in the Sanctuary of S. Anna,⁷ but also makes an

⁵ Bérard 2017: 67 – 72.

⁶ Beste 2016; 2018.

⁷ See now De Cesare, Portale and Sojc 2020.

important contribution to the overall picture of the most recent research on Agrigento and its surroundings.

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Roman to Late Roman

Laura Pfuntner, *Urbanism and Empire in Roman Sicily*. pp. 306, b/w ill. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-4773-1722-8, hardcover €39.

- Belvedere, O. and A. Burgio (eds) 2012. *Carta archeologica e sistema informativo territoriale del Parco archeologico e paesaggistico della Valle dei templi di Agrigento*. Palermo: Regione Sicilia-Assessorato dei Beni culturale e dell'Identità siciliana.
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- Beste, H. 2018. Funktion und Deutung der Stützfiguren am Olympieion von Agrigent, in Frommel *et al.* (eds) *Construire avec le corps humain. Les ordres anthropomorphes et leurs avatars dans l'art européen de l'antiquité à la fin du XVIe siècle*: 23–36. Rome: Campisano Editore.
- De Cesare, M., E.Ch. Portale and N. Sojc (eds) 2020. *The Akragas Dialogue. New Investigations on Sanctuaries in Sicily*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
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Roman rule signalled radical changes in the urban systems of the Mediterranean. More complex is the understanding of the restructuring that occurred in the Greek speaking lands, where a dense network of *poleis* existed already since the Archaic period. In the province of Achaia, although the basic elements of its Classical past were maintained (e.g., a modular urban system with hundreds of self-governing poleis which were sustained mainly by surpluses produced in their territories), in the Roman period this area was characterized by a significantly smaller number of cities and rural sites, in respect to pre-Roman times. Of great importance was the establishment of a few highly-centralized administrative centres of free or colonial status and economically privileged, that now became the focus of Roman administration and wealth. The majority of minor centres had from now on a marginal role, and many of them remained completely outside the new economic system.¹

Pfuntner's book deals with another area largely belonging to the Greek city-state world, which, like the Greek mainland mentioned above, presented similar symptoms in its urban system under Roman rule. Pre-Roman Sicily was highly urbanized: the Copenhagen Polis Center Inventory lists 47 poleis in Archaic and Classical times,² while the number of self-governing cities and hill-top settlements in the third century BC is estimated to be at least 74.³ After this period, however, Sicily presented phenomena of deurbanization, as Wilson has shown long ago.⁴

According to current scholarship, the causes that led to these phenomena must not be sought only in the military activities that both mainland Greece and Sicily experienced in Republican times (leading to demographic and consequently urban decline). The explanations must also take into account other parameters (e.g., ecological factors), and more importantly, the economic system of the Roman Empire. This system was dominated by "a proto-capitalist, commercializing, and globalizing

¹ For general surveys, see Alcock 1993; Bintliff 2012: 310-336; Rizakis 2014; Karambinis 2018.

² Fischer-Hansen *et al.* 2004.

³ De Ligt 2020: 224.

⁴ Wilson 1985; 1988; 1990.