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Multiperiod

Peter Talloen. *Cult in Pisidia. Religious practice in southwestern Asia Minor from Alexander the Great to the rise of christianity*. pp. xix+412, 96 b/w illustrations, 1 map. 2015. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers n.v. ISBN 978-2-503-99114-6 paperback €109.

P. Talloen's research into cults and religious practices in Pisidia is the subject of the 10th volume in the series entitled 'Studies in Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology' edited by Marc Waelkens, which contains the copious results of the investigations conducted as part of the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project.

The main value of this work lies in its systematic gathering of data, which represents a big step towards providing a complete picture of the available evidence, which previously had been scattered across a wide variety of specialist publications, at times quite hard to obtain. Testifying to this are the 41 pages of the bibliography, which constitute a point of reference for the investigations, whose target region, in contrast to the coastal plain of Pamphylia, lies deep inland. Indeed, Pisidia is characterised by rugged mountainous and forested terrain, and was inhabited in ancient times by warlike tribes. Apart from the innovative Project involving excavations, research and restoration, conducted with extraordinary results in Sagalassos by the Belgian Archaeological Mission of the University of Leuven, this region has never been subject to such wide-ranging research into the settlements and their surrounding territory.

The volume opens with a detailed and useful introductory chapter (pp. 1-44) presenting the *Status Quaestionis* of the research into cults in Pisidia, the methods used and the historical and geographical background of the region. The chapter is accompanied by a map (Map 1) of Pisidia indicating the main ancient settlements and the neighbouring regions of Lycia, Phrygia, Lykaonia and Pamphylia, the latter characterised by large coastal cities. Antioch in Pisidia, despite its name, is correctly listed as one of the 'ancient cities outside Pisidia'. However, as the author points out (p. 13), '... the geographical definition of that region remains a complex problem, as the boundaries of the geographical and ethnic unit... seem to have shifted through time...'. In practical terms, the region between the lake of Eğirdir and the broad plain at the foot of the Sultan Dağları, dominated by the city

of Antioch, constitutes an intermediate region lying between a number of cultural entities, as recently affirmed by H. Bru, who spoke of an ‘enclave phrygio-pisidienne’.¹ In addition, the creation by Galerius of the Roman province of Pisidia, centred on Antioch, at the beginning of the 4th century, resulted in ‘quelque sorte par un déplacement du centre de gravité de l’appellation de cette région vers le Nord.’ It should be pointed out however that the city, with the sanctuary of *Men Askaenòs*, where interesting forms of ‘cohabitation culturelles’ were observed to develop,² offers elements of extraordinary importance for reconstructing the religious system of the entire Pisidia region and should deserve greater consideration.

The central body of the volume is composed of three parts: I. The Indigenous Background (pp. 45-75). II. The Hellenistic Period (pp. 77-148). III. The Imperial Period (pp. 151-343). There is also a long concluding chapter (pp. 353-366), followed by the Bibliography and the Index.

Since the text is organised into numerous sub-chapters, it would have been a good idea, to facilitate reference, to include the titles of the paragraphs with their relative page numbers in the Contents (p. IX). For example, the chapter on the geographical situation (pp. 13-21) is divided into 3 sub-chapters: I. Geographical definition of Pisidia, II. Orography and hydrography, III. Palaeoclimate and vegetation. A more detailed Contents page would have enabled the reader to navigate the large variety of topics tackled more easily.

Despite the breadth of information contained in the introductory chapters, the author tends to repeat certain arguments, in accordance with an approach that maintains the scholarly structure of the doctoral dissertation from which the text published in the volume derives. Indeed, in the Introduction (pp. 21-26), with a youthful audacity and a broad perspective of *longue durée*, he begins his narrative from a much more ancient period, delving as far back as the Palaeolithic (2.5 million years ago). In addition, Part I. The Indigenous Background (pp. 45ff.) presents divinities, places of worship and ritual practices in Pisidia from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic, touching on themes that are no doubt interesting, but only indirectly linked to the specific field of the research. The part dedicated to the Historical Setting (pp. 21-44) could have been linked much more succinctly to the chapters of Part I, avoiding useless repetition. Lastly, it should be

pointed out that these initial chapters contain the volume’s one and only site plan of a cult context: it shows the ‘shrine phase’ of the Neolithic site of Höyücek.³ This highlights the lack of specific studies of places of worship in Pisidia and their spatial distribution in the Hellenistic-Roman period, and creates considerable difficulties for the author’s attempts to provide a detailed analysis of the contexts in which the ritual practices took place.

In Part II, dedicated to the Hellenistic period, the theme begins to be tackled in earnest, framing it within the more general phenomenon referred to by the author as Hellenisation, understood as comprising the dynamics of acculturation of the local populations that entered into contact with Greek culture in that period. It should however be noted that the term Hellenisation constitutes one of the most hotly debated historiographical parameters and has been subject to profound critical revision. Specifically, in the study of Greek colonisation in southern Italy and Sicily, this term has often been interpreted as referring to the automatic adoption of models, brought by the Greeks, by the indigenous cultures, which are thereby clearly undervalued.⁴ Concerning Pisidia too, the picture needs to be analysed from the dynamic perspectives of cultures in contact and peer polity interaction, which, as the author himself stresses in the treatment of the individual case studies (p. 87), makes it possible to highlight processes of hybridisation and contamination between Greek culture and the broad variety of experiences that the individual districts of Pisidia express. These processes also need to be seen in the context of the dynamics of socio-political development and settlement, whose complexity is clearly reflected in religion and ritual practices. In this perspective, the claim that there exist ‘two spheres of religious life, reflecting the two speeds of Hellenisation: Hellenic cult in the city and continuing indigenous life in the countryside’ (p. 150) seems to be excessively schematic.

The same problem is seen in Part III. The Imperial Period (pp. 151-343), in which the phenomena associated with the Roman presence are referred to with the term ‘Romanisation’, which has also been the object of critical revision with respect to an historiographical tradition that emphasises a one-way process, from the centre to a periphery,

¹ Bru 2017: 16-18.

² Belayche and Hošek 2011: 387-389.

³ P. 49, fig. 2, unfortunately to a scale that makes it impossible to make out the details. The other site plan published in the volume concerns the agora of Sia (p. 211).

⁴ A wide-ranging discussion of the various interpretative models applied to the phenomena associated with colonisation in Magna Graecia can be found in the recent volume: Ibridazione: 2017. See also Donnellan, Nizzo and Burgers 2016.

that passively adopted the impulses coming from outside. Together with other scholars, Terrenato has managed to summarise the debate over Romanisation by indicating the various levels on which contact between Rome and the various regional entities lying within its vast Empire unfolded: ‘...the emergence of a brand new make-up resulting from the combination of Roman and non-Roman traits rather than from a one-way transfer... In a perspective of this kind, what formerly went under the name of Romanisation can be cast in a completely different light.’⁵ In this problematic interpretative framework, Talloen’s claim that ‘This process [of Hellenisation] was not limited to the Hellenistic period...but continued after Rome had come to govern the East’ (p. 77) does not help to clarify the use of either of these terms. I must however stress that the author does prove to be fully aware of their limitations: ‘Both Hellenisation and Romanisation can be characterised as processes of cultural negotiation rather than oppressive cultural substitution...’ (p. 364).

The presentation of the various chapters on the Hellenistic and Roman phases, treated as two separate entities, highlights the difficulty of clearly distinguishing phenomena that are often closely connected, especially if it is considered that the Roman presence and the consequent processes of interaction with the Greek and indigenous populations began in the region well before the Imperial era, as the author himself argues, making reference to what happened after 132 BC, with the inclusion in the province of Asia of territories that had belonged to the Attalid kingdom. Predetermined sub-chapters (for example, p. 128 ‘B. Types of public ritual. 1. Offering. a. Sacrificial offering’ etc.) are used to describe the individual aspects of the cult in the chapters on both the Hellenistic and Roman-Imperial phases, resulting in an excessive fragmentation of the arguments. A good example here is the cult of Zeus Solymeus in Termessos,⁶ which is cited in numerous places in the text, without providing an overall reading of this cult, which was highly important in Pisidia, with its diverse aspects revealed by the inscriptions and the architectural and iconographic evidence. A presentation of the various cult contexts in topographical terms would probably have eliminated this excessive fragmentation, offering a unified record for each individual settlement and the places of cult found in them, describing their chronological and spatial

dimensions, the function of the various spaces, the relative epigraphical documentation and the system used for the votive offerings. Such an approach would also have required the inclusion of a more detailed cartography than what is shown in Map 1, indicating the *poleis*, the estates and the indigenous towns lying outside the system of the *poleis*, and providing an overall assessment of the hierarchy of the settlements, indispensable for understanding the impact of the religious phenomenon on the regional and settlement context.

Overall, the work appears to be guided by an antiquarian approach, based mainly on epigraphical and numismatic data and on individual artefacts, be they sculptures, ceramics or small objects. In the references to Greek terms however, greater precision is required (e.g. the plural of *temenos*, whose grammatical gender is neutral, is *temene* and not *temenoi*, p. 103; *Tymbriada*, not *Timbriada*). Undoubtedly, the painstaking collection by the author of artefacts bearing images of divinities is of great utility for the creation of an iconographic repertoire, but it is of little value for the reconstruction of cults when objects with everyday functions are considered out of context, such as the bone distaff decorated with the figure of Aphrodite, in which the image is generically associated with the female sphere (pp. 323–324, fig. 88, *passim*).

The cult and sanctuary contexts would have benefited from being presented separately from the other locations in the city such as gymnasia, *agorai*, theatres, baths etc., in which the references to traditional divinities, as well as to the Imperial cult, should be read in connection with the specific functions of the individual monumental complexes. Considering the objective of Talloen’s research, I feel it would have been more productive to treat sacred contexts such as the cave sanctuary dedicated to Meter Theon Vegeinos, in Zindan Mağarası, in the territory of Tymbriada, separately and in greater depth. In this site, to which a study by T. Ismaelli dedicated to oracular practices in Asia Minor has recently drawn attention, the recent excavations have made it possible to interpret the use of sacred space and to reconstruct the rituals that took place there from a contextual perspective, with substantial support from the epigraphical data.⁷ The construction of a ritual topography makes it possible to reveal the communication function of cult practices in relation to the public life of the individual communities and the creation of specific identities, as has been highlighted by

⁵ Terrenato 2008: 236; see also Terrenato 1998; Webster 2001.

⁶ Büyükkolancı 1996: 116–122 identifies the Ionic peripteros N5, of the Middle-Hellenistic period, as the most important temple of the cult of Zeus Solymeus in Termessos.

⁷ Ismaelli 2009: 166–175.

recent anthropological research.⁸ However, the antiquarian approach of Talloen's study does not allow for sufficient deployment of the methods that have matured in the field of the archaeology of cults, including the integrated study of spaces where the religious practices unfolded. Apart from the rather rudimentary site plan of the lower agora of Sia (p. 211), the volume contains no site plans of Greco-Roman places of worship, and the votive material is not presented in relation to the individual contexts. No palaeo-botanical analyses of the deposits that might identify the plant species used in the ritual activities appear to have been conducted, or indeed archaeo-zoological analyses that might make it possible to reconstruct the selection of animals to be sacrificed. On p. 130, the references to animal sacrifices are based solely on literary and epigraphical documents.

The observations made here are a measure of the interest that Peter Talloen's book generates; given the great care with which the data were gathered and the completeness of the information, his research constitutes an essential repertoire of reference, which raises expectations that the author will seek to further develop his studies in the future. This will surely be of great benefit to the study of religious practices, in Pisidia and the other regions of Anatolia, so rich in as-yet untapped potential for our knowledge of Hellenistic-Roman history.

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This volume is a collection of papers delivered at a conference celebrating 55 years (1952-2007) of archaeological works at the Corinthian Isthmus.

After an Introduction, which includes Early Iron Age through 5th century AD written sources mentioning Corinth and the Isthmus and a brief geographical and topographical description of the region, the authors summarize the research history, from the first recordings by travelers in the 15th century.

Archaeological research by Leake and Monceaux in the 19th century led to the identification of the Fortress at the Isthmian precinct wall and to the belief that substantial remains were to be ascribed to Homeric Ephyra. In 1932, Romilly Jenkins of the British School in Athens showed that the Fortress and the structures beneath it did not predate the Roman period and that therefore the Temple of Isthmian Poseidon had to lie elsewhere. The latter, the Early Stadium, the shrine to Palaimon, the theater and the West Foundation, were uncovered in the 1960s by Oscar Broneer (University of Chicago). In 1967, Paul Clement excavated the Roman Bath, the Late Antique fortifications, the Area East of

⁸ Of great interest in this context is the collection of studies in Stravrianopoulou 2006.