

sociologico sulla tomba di Egina e sul suo proprietario. I caratteri distintivi della tomba di Egina la avvicinano ora all'una, ora all'altra delle situazioni prese a paragone; il risultato di questa analisi è che, nel ME, sia nella Grecia continentale che in alcune isole si individuano tombe di analogo, particolare rilievo. Tale rilievo è dato dalla presenza di alcuni fattori distintivi: l'architettura tombale e la scelta del luogo per la costruzione della tomba, la scelta degli oggetti di corredo ed il loro assortimento, il rituale funerario con le relative cerimonie prima, durante e dopo il funerale. La somma di tali fattori distintivi corrisponde al rango del defunto.

Conclude il volume una ricca panoramica sull'isola di Egina inserita nel contesto generale della situazione insediamentale, nel ME, dell'isola stessa e dei siti, cui le tombe di particolare spicco individuate nel capitolo precedente sono riferibili. Con alcune utili e chiare carte di distribuzione, viene posto l'accento sulla peculiarità della posizione dell'isola di Egina nell'Egeo, vicina al Peloponneso, ma anche prossima alle Cicladi e sulla rotta da Creta verso il continente. I contatti sono testimoniati da elementi della cultura materiale (es. ceramica, bronzi), ma anche da segnali di fenomeni sociali, di cui la tomba di Kolonna è portatrice; il processo di affermazione di gruppi elitari dominanti, che solo a Micene si può cogliere con la necessaria immediatezza nell'evoluzione dalle tombe a fossa più semplici e relative ad un solo inumato alle più complesse, ha interessato anche la comunità di Egina/Kolonna in una fase tarda ma non finale del ME, come testimonia la tomba del guerriero con il diadema. Mentre a Micene ed altrove, come sappiamo, tale processo si manifesta con sempre maggiore evidenza, a Egina sembra invece arrestarsi – non sappiamo per quali cause. La prima e per ora unica testimonianza che, tuttavia, il fenomeno ha avuto un inizio, è la deposizione isolata di Kolonna, il cui proprietario, secondo le conclusioni di S. K. Manolis e A. A. Neroutsos nello studio antropologico in appendice al volume, mostra notevoli affinità non con i contemporanei dalle tombe del ME di Lerna, Asine, Pylos ed Eleusi, bensì proprio con gli individui di Micene, Circolo B – elemento che non manca di suscitare in chi legge numerosi interrogativi, che potranno costituire occasione di interessanti approfondimenti negli studi futuri.

Non resta che ringraziare Imma Kilian-Dirlmeier per averci permesso, attraverso l'analisi di una fonte archeologica di così difficile interpretazione, di cogliere i profondi mutamenti di una società in evoluzione e per aver saputo trattare con solidi argomenti e con una prosa scientificamente ineccepibile, ma nello stesso tempo varia e mai monotona, i dati importanti che dalla tomba di Egina vengono alla luce.

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K. PILAFIDIS-WILLIAMS, *The Sanctuary of Aphaia on Aigina in the Bronze Age*. Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut. Hirmer, München 1998, pp. X + 198, figs. 2, pls. 74. ISBN 3-7774-8010-X.

Up to the eighties the study of cult activities in the Aegean reflected the methodological pattern dominating research on Bronze Age religion in this part of the Mediterranean from the early years of the 20th century. The approach follows two broad lines deriving above all from the work of Arthur Evans and Martin Nilsson, namely a tendency to give more weight to the meaning of symbols than the contextual data, and interpretation of the archaeological evidence on the basis of the Greek and Roman literary tradition.

A significant turning point in the approach to Aegean cult practice came with the publication of the Mycenaean sanctuary of Philakopi at Melos edited by Colin Renfrew

(Renfrew 1984, see also Renfrew 1994), which first gave explicit expression, in paradigmatic form, to certain criteria serving in the interpretation of an excavated site such as a place of cult. Moreover, the value of the archaeological and cultural context of the religious symbols was asserted as a primary factor in this field of research.

Reference to Renfrew's categories in the analysis of Aegean cult complexes has since become mandatory, and is naturally also made by K. Pilafidis-Williams in the volume *The Sanctuary of Aphaia on Aigina in the Bronze Age*, publishing almost all the Mycenaean material found in the area of the temple of Aphaia at Aegina.

The area of the temple of Aphaia has been known as a possible pre-Classical place of cult since 1901, when Adolf Furtwaengler turned up a number of Mycenaean statuettes there. New finds of the kind were made during excavations carried out in the area between 1966 and 1989, confirming the existence of a votive deposit coming between the chronological limits of LH IIIA and LH IIIC (cf. French 1971, 107; Hope Simpson, Dickinson 1979; Wright 1994, 70). Although the material was not found in the original context, the evidence now assembled in the volume by K. Pilafidis-Williams is undoubtedly important, offering as it does new data on aspects of the Mycenaean frequentation of the site, and including the numerically largest set of Mycenaean clay statuettes attributable to a single cult place ever found. The volume consists of an introduction (chapter I), with an account of the circumstances in which the material was found; a catalogue of the material (chapter II); a number of chapters (III-V) reconstructing the characteristics of the cult and of the divinities worshiped in the Mycenaean sanctuary, and a closing chapter (VI) dealing with the cult on the island of Aegina in the Bronze Age. There follow four appendixes comprising a list of the places where material included in the catalogue was found (I), an account of the clay analysis carried out on samples of pottery and figurines (II), a list of all the Mycenaean kourotrophos statuettes with references to context and associations (III), and tables summarising the material in the catalogue, statuettes being ordered by type, the pottery fragments by form and chronology (IV). Particularly significant is the table comparing material from the sanctuary area with that found in other Mycenaean sanctuaries (IV, chart 2a).

Much of the material, including vessels and figurines, was gathered from levels in contact with the rock bank on the eastern terrace and south of the ramp leading to the temple of Aphaia. No Bronze Age structures were found in this area and, with one exception, the levels in question revealed a distinct prevalence of later material. At the same time, the considerable quantity of Mycenaean figured material, amounting to 648 pieces, leaves little doubt that some cult-type activity must have been carried out in the neighbourhood, and possibly on the very terrace where the temple was raised.

Detailed analysis of the material reveals that the site was frequented as from MH and a point worth stressing here is the presence, alongside the MH pottery, of at least one MM seal and an MM IIIA animal rhyton. However, the material does not suffice to hypothesise, as the author does, that the beginnings of the sanctuary go back to such an early date, nor indeed to hypothesise the presence of Cretans in the temple of Aphaia area in the same phase (p. 157). The presence of material imported from Crete to Aegina in the Proto-Palatial period is hardly surprising. In this phase the Minoanisation of the settlement of Kolonna, in the area of the modern city of Aegina, is notable and must have played some part in the making of the complex social-economic organization that seems to have constituted the earliest of the early states of the central-western Aegean (Rutter 1993, 776-78; Niemeier 1995; for a view independent of Crete, Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997).

The beginnings of the sanctuary can be no earlier than LH IIIA2. In fact, LH IIIA2-B is attributed with most of the votive offerings, among which predominate female statuettes

(Phi, Psi, Late Psi) and statuettes of quadrupeds (Wavy, Linear and Spine types). Alongside these we find a group of kourotrophoi and chariots, and at least two large, hollow figures not unlike the one found at Aigina itself, on Mount Oros (Pilafidis-Williams 1995). In this phase, among both pottery and the statuettes, we find many imports from Argolis and, in particular, by far most of the vessel fragments analysed are attributable to the Mycenaean/ Berbati workshop. Moreover, almost all the Mycenaean statuettes of kourotrophoi come from the same region on the mainland. The composite vessel 793, of Knossian origin, and together with it two conical cups are the only elements in this phase that can be traced to Crete. Among the LBA material there are also beads, seals, pendants and a fragmentary bronze helmet, which have been, or are to be, published elsewhere.

The author concludes that the sanctuary in the area of the Temple of Aphaia can be classified as an open-air shrine located on top of a hill, and that it was dedicated to a female divinity. The offerings of kourotrophoi in LH IIIA and IIIB, found in a quantity unprecedented for a Mycenaean sacred place, show an emphasis on fertility. The settlement the sanctuary related to remains unknown, no traces having been found in the surroundings. In fact, in this phase the cemeteries known to us on the island reveal fairly dense population, but the connection with Argolis itself – evidenced by the great quantity of imports – is I believe such as to suggest a sanctuary institutionally associated with one of the major centres of the region, possibly Mycenae itself.

Although the author sees the character of the sanctuary as remaining uniform throughout the Bronze Age, a change in the typology of materials and the presence or absence of certain types is found in the course of LH IIIC. In fact, to this phase we attribute various female figurines (Late Psi), possibly a few heads, a couple of Spine II type animal figurines and fragments 542-544 from figures of larger dimensions. In relation to the latter, the author notes that manufacture is by hand while the decoration is reminiscent of wheelmade animals (p. 79). To judge by the photo – there is no drawing – they may in fact have belonged to bovinds. At the same time, both kourotrophoi and chariots disappear and there is no telling whether the larger female figures were still in use. In the case of the pottery, we find a distinct decline both in the quantity of material and in the range of types attributable to mature IIIC, while imports from Argolis to a large extent give way to the local workshops. We may therefore reasonably conclude that there not only occurred a change in cult practices, but even in the very status of the sanctuary – no longer showing regular contact with the mainland – and its relations with the surrounding area.

Furthermore, the interpretation the author has to offer of the cult characteristics and the nature of the sanctuary are hardly convincing, drawing as she does on universal categories of religiosity that have little enough to do with the social-economic system involved (cf. e.g. on this point Wright 1994). One can only puzzle over such assertions as the author's that the nature of the sanctuary is not unlike that of the small modern church of Ayia Marina (p. 160), on the bay to the east of the temple hill, or indeed of the many churches of modern Greece periodically attended by the faithful of every social class (p. 153). Over and above the fact that a comparative approach of the sort must be applied with rigorous anthropological method if it is to be at all valid, no conclusion regarding the nature of the sanctuary and its relations with the area has solid ground to stand on given the absence of structures and, moreover, the fact that no related settlement has ever been brought to light. Equally debatable is the attempt to associate the divinity worshiped in the Bronze Age with Aphaia, dedicatee of the Archaic and Classical temples, and to interpret Mycenaean archaeological evidence on the basis of the later tradition. In fact, the author takes up the legend of Aphaia as recorded by Antoninus Liberalis (*Metamorph.* 40, 1), who

presents the divinity – closely connected with Artemis – as a local version of Cretan Britomartis and Diktyнна, concluding that the Cretan connection is well documented in the archaeological evidence of the Bronze Age sanctuary. Without dwelling further on the question of just how valid interpretations of the archaeological Bronze Age in the light of later literary traditions may be, we can say that the Minoanisation of Kolonna at Aegina, and with it the most intense contact between the island and Crete, occurred in MH and not in concurrence with the best years of the sanctuary in the area of the temple of Aphaia, to be placed in LH IIIA2-B. Moreover, the scant material of Cretan origin or inspiration belonging to LH IIIA-B and found here does not warrant reconstruction of regular contact with Crete. No grounds therefore exist, in the first place on the basis of the archaeological evidence, for the hypothesis that the birth of the legend of Aphaia is to be attributed to relations between Crete and Aegina dating to the Mycenaean age, or that the legend may have anything to do with the sanctuary in the temple area given that its links with Crete are virtually non-existent.

Nor should we lose sight of the fact that on the site in question the Bronze Age figured material, like that of the Archaic and Classical periods, shows a great many examples of kourotrophoi, or at any rate of statuettes alluding to fertility. To account for this coincidence the author takes a perfectly explicit stand in favour of seamless cult continuity from the Bronze Age on (p. 160) – despite the yawning gap opening between the mid-13th and 8th century BC – to conclude that the main characteristic of the divinity worshiped in the archaic and classical temple is to be sought in the two-fold nature of aspects represented by maternity and virginity, attested both in the Bronze Age archaeological evidence, i.e. in the group of twin kourotrophoi 176 (p. 144), and in the much later evidence of the cult of the Virgin Mary.

On the other hand, the return to cult practice in the area of the temple of Aphaia in the Geometric period could be taken in terms of a phenomenon involving the use of the tangible remains of the past in the course of the 8th century BC and the rise of well-organised political institutions (Alcock 1991). In other words, re-use of the earlier sanctuary in the Geometric period would not be simply due to an otherwise undocumented continuity in cult, but might rather be seen as the return to cult purposes of an area that may – thanks to the earlier remains – have been an ideal place to legitimate claims over the surrounding area, possibly by one of the island's tribal confederations (Sinn 1988).

Although there are clearly limits to historical interpretation of the sanctuary, this volume by K. Pilafidis-Williams can be seen as a significant contribution to our knowledge of cult practices in the Aegean. It offers accurate and complete publication of the Bronze Age material found in the area of the temple of Aphaia – taking its own rightful place in the DAI series – and it demonstrates unequivocally that the area saw cult practice as early as the Mycenaean age, therefore, we can expect to be seeing it in the relevant bibliography for a good many years.

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