

CE investigated. A number of hypotheses dealing with the relationship between the temple and rock-cut cave are discussed including processions, assembly and ritual communal meals within the broader landscape. An exploration of the use of the natural slope between the two architectural features is a point of interest and illustrates how A. has employed an innovative approach to the site overall (pp. 18–19).

The new interpretation of a pyramidally shaped stone found during the original excavations as a *betyl* is convincing, and the comparative material presented helps to confirm the argument and to emphasise the possible aniconic nature of the deity venerated here (pp. 43–9 with reconstruction). There is also an argument made for a Christian phase of use in the rock-cut caves although the nature of the carved figures upon which this interpretation is based remains somewhat uncertain. Chapter 3 includes the detail and analysis of a dense amount of material, along with new interpretations, and this leaves the reader with the impression that further elaboration would have been helpful. The material could have been divided into two separate chapters, one dealing with the landscape and one with the re-interpretation around the excavations.

The fourth chapter consists of an update on the state of the site today and some concluding observations. This short overview is another area where there seems more to do. The conclusions are very brief, and although they engage with some of the complex ideas presented in previous chapters, the aniconic aspect of the sanctuary especially, the reader is left wanting more to be made of this very useful study. As it stands, the reassessment of the evidence from Ras il-Wardija makes for an important addition to the overall understanding and interpretation of the site. The use of a range of approaches to the material helps to illuminate much about the neglected site and the volume pulls together the various phases of Malta's history and many aspects of current theories about Mediterranean connectivity and continuities. If anything, A.'s publication presents more questions than it answers and serves to create further interest in the exploration of these points of contact across the Mediterranean. The reassessment of the site only confirms Malta's importance as a meeting place between cultures and communities through religious worship, agriculture and navigation.

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## NEW DISCOVERIES ON KALE AKTE

COLLURA (F.) (ed.) *Studia Calactina I. Ricerche su una città greco-romana di Sicilia: Kalè Akté – Calacte*. Con contributi di Sergio Cascella, Emiliano Arena e Benedetto Carroccio. (BAR International Series 2813.) Pp. viii + 460, ill., colour pls. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2016. Paper, £69. ISBN: 978-1-4073-1480-8.

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This book is a valuable volume on the archaeology of Kale Akte, a small ancient city that corresponds to modern Caronia (Messina). As reported in the title, the book appears to be the first volume of a presumed thematic series on the site. C.'s book, which is much to be

welcomed as an up-to-date work on Sicilian local archaeology, fits into well-established scholarship on the site.

Antiquarian scholars have been interested in Caronia since the sixteenth century, although professional archaeologists have investigated and surveyed the site from the 1970s. The current scholarship on Kale Akte is represented by a series of preliminary articles that provide data from archaeological investigations carried out by the local Superintendency of Messina, in particular by C. Bonanno and M.C. Lentini in the 1990s and early 2000s. A more recent short monograph has shed new light on a research project funded by the POR (Programma Operativo Regionale) 2001–04, which revealed much information on the Roman phases of the site.<sup>1</sup>

The volume is divided into two main sections. The first contains a series of substantial and detailed chapters on the site's archaeology and history, written by C. The second section comprises 'Approfondimenti/Insights', written by C. and other scholars. These pieces of work appear to be independent essays on aspects or classes of archaeological materials relevant to Caronia.

The book opens with a short summary of the archaeological research at Caronia. Chapter 1 gives a detailed introduction to Kale Akte and provides an in-depth analysis of the historical, archaeological, epigraphical and numismatic sources on the site, which are properly listed and described (pp. 14–26). The second chapter aims to contextualise Caronia in the wider area of the centre-western Nebrodi Mountains during the Archaic period, describing other significant local centres (e.g. Gioiosa Guardia and Herbita).

Chapter 3, 'Ricerche nell'area urbana I: La città collinare' depicts the ancient site on Caronia's hilltop, which is the most remarkable archaeological area of the city. The chapter gives a very detailed account of the urban archaeology, which has been explored by a series of excavations in the past few decades. C. has easily divided the city into six main sectors ('Settore A–F'), including some minor sub-sectors, which he properly analyses in this chapter. C. merges published data with new information that has been derived from individual surveys, which he carried out 'in the field'. This provides an up-to-date outline of the present archaeological evidence. He also adds a substantial catalogue of the most significant finds discovered during this long-standing surveying activity of the area. These finds are currently kept at the storehouses of the Superintendency of Messina (pp. 128–82).

Chapter 4 offers a description of the second major archaeological area of Kale Akte, which is located on the Tyrrhenian coastal strip of Marina di Caronia. Major excavations were carried out in Contrada Pantano in the late 1990s, and many other casual discoveries have been made on private lands. Interestingly, C. gives some hypotheses regarding the ancient port of Caronia, which has not yet been found (pp. 225–30), hoping for future research in the coastal area. Chapter 5 is an account of the third archaeological sector of Kale Akte, the ancient necropolis, which needs more detailed investigation. Classical necropoleis are mostly unpublished in the Messina province (see, for instance, the ancient

<sup>1</sup>P. Fiore, 'Acquedotto sacro a Demetra', *Sicilia Archeologica* 4, 14 (1971), 37–41; P. Fiore, 'Contributo all'individuazione della zona archeologica dell'antica Calacta', *Sicilia Archeologica* 4, 16 (1971), 54–61; C. Bonanno, 'Scavi e ricerche a Caronia e S. Marco d'Alunzio (1989–1994)', *Kokalos* 39–40 (1993–94), 953–87; C. Bonanno, 'Scavi e indagini nel territorio di Caronia e San Marco d'Alunzio', *Kokalos* 43–44 (1997–98), 423–53; M.C. Lentini, K. Göransson and A. Lindhagen, 'Excavations at Sicilian Caronia, Ancient Kale Akte, 1999–2001', *Opuscula Romana* 27 (2002), 79–108; E. Bonacini, *Il territorio calatino nella Sicilia imperiale e tardoromana* (2007); C. Bonanno (ed.), *Kalè Aktè. Scavi in contrada Pantano di Caronia Marina, 2003–2005* (2009).

graveyard at Tyndaris), and this set of new information is undoubtedly vital for a better understanding of the northern-Sicilian funerary archaeology.

What was the destiny of Kale Akte after the end of the Roman period? C. assesses the archaeological and historical evidence of medieval and modern Caronia in Chapter 6, offering fresh data on a subject that has been largely neglected in the past. In Chapter 7 we are given an overview of the interaction between the ancient centre and its *chora*, which benefits from recently documented minor and previously unknown sites (see the map on p. 305).

The second section contains a series of elaborate essays on the archaeology of Caronia. The subjects are diverse but mainly focus on a specific class of archaeological materials, such as Archaic and Classical pottery (pp. 311–44), the honorary decree *SEG LIX*, 1102 (pp. 345–72), a remarkable Roman sundial (pp. 373–78),<sup>2</sup> numismatic finds (pp. 379–92) and ‘Sigillata Italica’ pottery (pp. 393–412). The numismatic report by B. Carroccio is a vital contribution to reconstruct coin circulation at Kale Akte. He presents a set of coins that were found in a survey of the area of Caronia. Unfortunately, most of the coin finds from the 1980s and 1990s excavations, carried out by the Superintendency of Messina, have never been published. This omission does not help to understand fully the local coin circulation in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (p. 380: ‘lacuna rappresentata dalla mancata edizione critica dei ritrovamenti avutisi nel corso degli scavi eseguiti tra gli anni ’80 e ’90 del secolo scorso a Caronia’). This section ends with an essay on the ancient *phrourion* of Pizzo Cilona and its archaeological evidence (pp. 413–34). The volume concludes with sixteen valuable colour plates (pp. 437–52) showing assemblages of finds from the archaeological surveys (see, for instance, plates vi–x).

There are, however, some missing elements in the volume that should be reported. Given the substantial photographic materials offered in this book, one would have expected a list of images, which unfortunately has not been included. Another vital missing element is an index, which would have eased any potential search for significant places, objects and names of people.

Finally, what are the best elements of this book? First, although the book is written in Italian, each chapter is introduced by a long English abstract, which summarises the section’s contents thoroughly. Second, C.’s essay is generally well organised: the structure appears articulate, and the contents are clearly explained. Separate reference lists for each chapter and ‘Insight’ are certainly to be welcomed, instead of placing them in a much longer bibliography at the end of the book. Third, in terms of methodology and approach, we appreciate that C. has merged historical data, archaeological and survey results, and catalogue entries into a whole, combined and thorough analysis of the site.

Despite those slight omissions, this volume is an excellent piece of work that offers an impressive, substantial and well-organised amount of archaeological data on ancient Kale Akte. C.’s work can be considered to be a definitive essay on the site, even if further research would certainly be appreciated to improve our knowledge on the Messina province, which has been archaeologically neglected up to now.

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<sup>2</sup>Roman sundials are quite rare in the province of Messina. One, for instance, was found in Tindari in the early nineteenth century and is now preserved at the Museo Archeologico ‘A. Salinas’ in Palermo (S. Moscati and C. Di Stefano, *Palermo. Museo Archeologico* [2006], p. 35).