

**Rezension zu:**

**Raimon Graells i Fabregat (Coord.), El valor social i comercial de la vaixel·la metàl·lica al Mediterrani centre-occidental durant la protohistòria, in: Revista d'Arqueologia de Ponent 16-17, 2006-2007, 257-340 <81 pages, 65 illustrations. Edited by Secció d'Arqueologia, Prehistòria i Història Antiga, Departament d'Història, Facultat de Lletres, Universitat de Lleida. ISSN: 1131-883-X>**

The editors of the *Revista d'Arqueologia de Ponent*, a dynamic archaeological journal from Lleida, Spain, dedicate over 80 pages in their 16th-17th volume to the problem of the socio-economical functions of metallic vessel in the Mediterranean. This part of the journal, entitled "Debat" - which was envisaged at the beginning as a separate publication - consists of 7 articles with an introduction by Raimon Graells i Fabregat, the originator and coordinator of the enterprise.

Scholars from Spain and Italy present reinterpreted material from sites across the Mediterranean Sea region, with special concentration on the Iberian and the Italian Peninsulas. In the final part of the publication there is a collected, recent and extensive bibliography. Each paper includes notes, copious drawings and black and white photographs of good quality. All these technical details give a good impression and reflect the care and attention of the editors.

R. Graells i Fabregat leads the "Debat" with a presentation of the problem of the metallic vessel, which acts as a synthesis of the issues treated in the following articles. He argues that although the metallic vessel is seen in general as a luxury product, also associated with the power of its proprietor, the cultural movements make it difficult to undertake an analysis of its social and commercial value. The difficulty he considers the most important is to distinguish the meaning and position of the metallic vessel in the scale of value of the producers, as distinct from that of the traders and of the receivers.

This problem is treated further in the first article, where Cristiano Iaia regards the symposium as a vital party for the Greeks and also for the emerging aristocracy of Etruria, since metallic vessels were necessary items for the ritualized consumption of wine. Chiara Tarditi, who considers the banquet as a mechanism for emulation in order to gain social prestige, presents a similar point of view. She observes that in the regions of Peucezia and Messapia there was an intensive trade of bronze vessels with Greece. However, the progressive diffusion of the practice of banquet led to the devaluation of the metallic vessel used in those social rituals. Another example from the Italian Peninsula described by Ferdinando Sciacca is based on the anthropological concept of gift-exchange. This idea allows him to say that the exchanges of metallic vessels were realized between persons of equal high status and that served to establish and maintain alliances. In the publication we can find one more paper that directly evokes anthropology as a source of interpretative inspirations; Jaime Vives-Ferrándiz Sánchez is seeing imports as objects with associated dynamic value. In that sense he is following the line of investigations drawn by Appadurai and Kopytoff oriented on the social life of things. The conclusions he reaches are extremely interesting: the Etruscan metallic vessels generally related to practices of consumption in the Iberian Peninsula hadn't necessarily been used in banquettes for the simple reason that the objects are adopted in the local manner of doing things. In the same way Xosé-Lois Armada Pita, assessing the social significance of bronze vessels from the Iberian

Peninsula, argues that the exotic products didn't have an inherent value, as any such value was only created by subsequent social negotiations.

Raimon Graells i Fabregat, by studying in depth the protons belonging to two big caldrons, confirms that they reached the Iberian Peninsula thanks to the Greek traders. His typological analysis is parallel to the discussion on the value and significance of these objects. In the final part, Raimon Graells i Fabregat observes that the metallic vessel was highly restricted item in the whole Mediterranean and his presence in the Iberian Peninsula was due to the existence of an elite class who had enough economical power to participate in the Mediterranean prestige goods economy. Javier Jiménez Ávila sketches a panorama of bronze vessels in the western Mediterranean, paying special attention to the contexts of deposition and the ways of circulation. He argues that the very limited use of bronze vessel was characteristic for early stages of the Orientalizing period; however, later on the modest vessel made of bronze became more and more popular among the lower Mediterranean aristocracy.

To produce diverse, but at the same time integrated analyses of the social and economical significance of archaeological objects, is certainly no easy task. However, this publication reflects a growing and most welcome trend in the study of the late prehistory and Orientalizing period in western Mediterranean to focus attention on exactly these issues. Such a tendency makes clear that we are in the presence of an interpretative stage in Spanish and Italian archaeology.

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