

non-consanguineous peers” (226). Bittles applies a general critique to this prevalent research and publication bias on health-adherence aspects of consanguineous unions, the design of such studies and their modes of data collection. Moreover, he contextualizes this somewhat additional 7% morbidity and mortality in consanguinity with Down’s syndrome and fetal alcohol syndrome and thus questions the ethical point of view for calls for legislative prohibition of first-cousin unions (227–229): The risk of conceiving a child with Down’s syndrome increases with maternal age, to 10% by the age of 49. Fetal alcohol syndrome is caused by maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy and results in various severe physical and neurological problems. An estimated 2% of pregnancies are affected in the USA, more than 6% in South Africa.

Anyhow, due to the complexity of the concept of inbreeding in genetics, consanguinity is basically of limited significance in explaining the prevalence of certain diseases in a population. Because, in addition to relationships between biological relatives, inbreeding comprises genetic drift and the founder effect, positive and negative assortative mating, community endogamy, and the subdivision into isolated groups (78). In consequence, rather than operating with inbreeding and outbreeding as separate and opposite reproductive strategies, human mating should be considered as a genetic continuum that ranges across random mating, positive assortative mating (within geographically, generational, religious, educational, or socioeconomically defined groups), endogamous marriage (preferential or obligatory between descendants of a common ancestor), and consanguineous marriage (in which the partners share a close biological ancestry within the preceding two to three generations) (5f.).

In addition to adjusting risk percentages and clarifying terminology regarding consanguinity, Bittles points to a problematic application of conclusions drawn from studies in nonhuman species, to the widespread overlooking of nongenetic factors, and to the fact that our understanding of the human genome and its expression is still limited; even investigations into epigenetic mechanisms are in their early stages. Above all, he argues, any discussion of the genetic burden of inbreeding depression might soon be balanced out by the global epidemiological transition from a communicable to noncommunicable disease profile (111). Today, intra-familial marriage is on a general decline. Social change, increased mobility, and female education advancement are some of the contemporary powerful additional influences on marriage choices. Less clear for the author, however, is the influence of currently increasing levels of religious fundamentalism.

In this book, Bittles has critically consulted and assembled medical, scientific, legal, demographic, genetic, social, socioeconomic, public, gender-sensitive, and customary opinions on consanguineous marriage. The resulting volume comprises 15 chapters unfolding the history, prevalence, and effects of close kin mating, a comprehensive reference section, an index, and illustrative tables and figures. Though a list of abbreviations and a glossary would have even increased its accessibility, “Consanguinity in Context,” in general, is a rich, well-structured, well-

written, convincing, and in many details astonishing book recommendable for students as well as for scholarly work.

Eva-Maria Knoll

**Boissevain, Jeremy:** *Factions, Friends, and Feasts. Anthropological Perspectives on the Mediterranean.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2013. 310 pp. ISBN 978-0-85745-844-5. Price: \$ 95.00

This volume consists of an enormously rich collection of 15 essays carefully chosen by the author – one of the contemporary masters of the anthropology of southern Europe – from the substantial library of his own work on aspects of politics, economics, society, and culture in the Mediterranean. The author’s introduction incisively draws out the coherence of the collection as a whole and guides the reader through works he has published over the course of five decades of engagement with the region. Given Jeremy Boissevain’s long and close association with the island it is no surprise that Malta is one of the focal points of the book, but the volume also contains detailed descriptions and analyses of a southern Sicilian town and the Italian diaspora community in Montreal as well as reflections on the Mediterranean region itself. Moreover, the wide-ranging ethnographic substance of the book is underscored by a highly significant contribution to a central aspect of anthropological theory that has preoccupied Boissevain from the early days of his training in social anthropology at the LSE, namely, the limitations of structural functionalism as an approach to society and politics not only in and of the Mediterranean itself but also in more general terms. He argues that the contemporary legacies of structural functionalism (an approach that he suggests that has been adopted uncritically by several generations of social anthropologists following the work of Evans-Pritchard and Radcliffe Brown) are simply incapable of dealing with such phenomena as the sociopolitical impacts of actions by networks of friends and allies that both routinely constitute the “factions” of the volume’s title and also are staple fare of the social life in and of the Mediterranean. Boissevain suggests that the relationship between structure and agency is a fundamental one and only by getting down to the quotidian detail of the latter – specifically in the form of questions about who forms networks of alliances, friendships, and factions – and when, why, and under what contexts they do this – may central aspects of the political dynamics of social life be properly appreciated.

The individual chapters cover a variety of aspects and dimensions of Mediterranean society. There is an early (originally 1964) account of political processes in Farrug, the Maltese village in which the author conducted his first anthropological field research. The chapter is a precursor to later fully-fledged ethnographic (Boissevain, *Saints and Fireworks. Religion and Politics in Rural Malta.* London 1965; Hal Farrug, *A Village in Malta.* New York 1969) and theoretical (Friends of Friends. *Networks, Manipulators, and Coalitions.* Oxford 1974) volumes on the uses of the ideas of network, party, and faction in the understanding of political processes in the region. There follows an

account of the economic and political reasons for the enduring poverty of a Sicilian town. The population finds itself literally trapped between a seemingly unshakable structure of gross inequality between landed and landless – which, not surprisingly, gives rise to socialist inclined resistance; a Catholic church notoriously unsympathetic to any remotely “red” social movement – and hence unwilling to support the town economically; and those (including Mafiosi) whose skill lies in the manipulation of factional and sectional interests. Law, order, and any rising prosperity are, at every point, subverted by breakdown of law, disorder, and apparent permanent poverty.

The volume’s three concluding chapters all concern the rise of tourism in Malta and southern Europe. All three have substantial resonances for the region as a whole. Issues raised include the impact of the (by now) million or so annual visitors to the ancient city of Mdina, erstwhile capital of Malta (and as such standing for comparable “heritage sites” in the region), the relation between “insiders” and “outsiders” in areas of high tourism numbers, and tourism-related property development along the Maltese coasts. One of the consequences of the latter has been the formation and subsequent activity by environmentally concerned NGOs seeking to challenge the weak, patron-client riddled, slightly corrupt legal and political instruments and institutions within the government(s) of Malta, supposedly keeping watch over the well-being of the island’s natural and built “heritage.” This account has strong relevance for much of the rest of the northern shore of the Mediterranean region. It also demonstrates the extent to which networks outside conventional party arrangements (which in Malta’s case consist primarily of the Labour and Nationalist parties) can work successfully to challenge such seemingly immovable structures. The analysis also serves to remind us that tourism continues to play a significant role in the political processes of the island and the region.

Tourism also plays a role, albeit not the only one, in Boissevain’s reflections on the revitalization of ritual events (festivals, saints days, and so on) in Europe: a case of the saints *not* marching out (to borrow the title of the volume’s tenth chapter). Indeed, an increasing number of anthropologists, including students, some of whom specialize in the anthropology of travel, tourism, and pilgrimage, are working on the topic, thus drawing out the significance of the ritual revitalization that Boissevain considers here and elsewhere (e.g., *Revitalising European Rituals*. London 1992).

Given that the book sets out to celebrate the ethnographic and theoretical potency of egocentred networks, one of the most interesting features of the volume as a whole is the author’s preoccupation throughout with the subtle interplay between, on the one hand, the factions and friends from which these networks are drawn, and the more enduring structures with which Boissevain frames the volume. We have already referred to the seeming permanence of the class structure of the Sicilian town. Acknowledging inspiration from Braudel, Boissevain devotes the first two chapters to two other features of the Mediterranean region, arguing that these are also

structurally pervasive, namely, the region’s climate and the “unhealed scars” of the ethnic and religious mosaic of populations that make up the region’s population. As to the former, he notes that the climatic divisions of the Mediterranean into cold winter and hot summer seasons have always been associated with different kinds of work, leisure, social disposition, and that the passages of trade cycles, family, and community life (inward looking in the winter, outward looking in the summer) are always shaped by climatic constraints. As to the latter, the argument is that the ethnic and national spatialities – routinely marked by conflict and contention – are almost as structurally permanent as the region’s climatic variations.

This is the only part of the volume with which the present reviewer would seek to question – and no better way to do this than by using Boissevain’s own formulations about the centrality of networks, parties, and their associated political rhetoric. Might it not be argued, quite precisely, that rather than assuming their structural permanence, another way to approach ethnic/religious “scars” might be to ask about the contexts and conditions under which these became “actively unhealed,” as it were – that is ready to be mobilized in conflict – and the contexts in which they might actually be healed. Are the “scars” that mark Greek and Turkish Cypriots, for example, or Israelis and Palestinians, fated to be “unhealed” until the end of time?

This volume will find a treasured place in the bookshelves of all those professionally interested in the Mediterranean as well as to more general readers including those who are drawn to its shores by one of the region’s features that this lively and challenging book celebrates in full, namely, the Mediterranean’s enduring fascination for visitors from all the corners of the world who have made it as it is.

Tom Selwyn

**Bollig, Michael, Michael Schnegg, and Hans-Peter Wotzka** (eds.): *Pastoralism in Africa. Past, Present, and Future*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013. 525 pp. ISBN 978-0-85745-908-4. Price: £ 62.00

This volume is a thought-provoking read. While drawing in other work, the weight of research that Bollig and his co-editors deliver here builds on a broad base of German scholarship, much of which has been hitherto insufficiently recognized by anglo/francophone readers. For this alone, the volume must stand as a significant contribution to the literature on pastoralist systems. As well as opening a window onto that world of German-language research publications, this volume covers a tremendous span of time, from 10,000 years or more before present through to the year of publication, and fills in hitherto underrepresented geographical spaces, with something of a focus on Namibia and Chad.

Following an introduction by the editors, the book begins with a section on “The Prehistory of Pastoralism,” with five chapters on the archaeology of Eastern Sahara (Sudan, Chad), West African savannas, Kenya, and South Africa. In the second section on “Historical and Contemporary Dynamics of Pastoralism,” five further chapters fo-