

inscription dates to around 700 B.C. Just how much the conjectured text may have been edited and adjusted to fit later conditions under which it was used remains problematic. For example, the colophon states that Nigidius said the calendar was valid for Rome (not Etruria); and there are various details that simply cannot go back to Etruscan Tages: for example, the month of August is referred to as ΑΥΤΟΥΣΤΟΣ.

The book contains a treasury of appendices of texts on Etruscan religion, sample Mesopotamian documents of divination, other brontoscopia, a time-line and a glossary. The carefully selected album of images at the front of the book is useful (though the publisher by reducing them to postage-stamp size has not done them justice). *Divining the Etruscan World* is a stimulating and pioneering work of interest and value for all Etruscan researchers and to a wide spectrum of scholars of ancient religion in Etruria, Italy and the Mediterranean. T. has pointed out in an authoritative way the specific path of divination from the Near East to Etruria, and now it is a challenge to others to test her conclusions by tracing the route (was there a significant stage along the way on Cyprus, an idea floated by T.?), by applying the proposed chronology, and by examining anew the evidence for other types of attested Etruscan divination (for example, augury, hepatoscopy, scrying) and whether and how they too may have been transmitted to Etruria at an early date via the Mesopotamian stream of tradition.

Florida State University
 ndegrummond@fsu.edu

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L. B. VAN DER MEER, *ETRUSCO RITU: CASE STUDIES IN ETRUSCAN RITUAL BEHAVIOUR*. Louvain/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011. Pp. vi+167, 33 illus. ISBN 9789042925380. €78.00.

Naturally, examination of ritual material dominates scholarship of the Etruscan culture, given the relatively small number of residential, or otherwise non-ritual, sites. In van der Meer's *Etrusco Ritu*, he organizes the material into three main chapters of family rituals, funerary rituals and public rituals. While these categories are not mutually exclusive in general, he makes a distinction between family rituals, which are usually practised once in a person's lifetime, and public rituals that are usually repeated (14).

Preliminary chapters set the scene by detailing definitions and views of rites and rituals with reference to ancient and modern analogies, as well as surveying recent scholarship on Etruscan rituals. More specifically, in ch. 3, M. includes a welcome description of some of the well-known anthropological and archaeological definitions of ritual. After much discussion of the strengths and shortcomings of the pedigree of definitions related to 'ritual', he states simply 'rites are here intended as single activities and rituals as a series of rites' (13). He then clarifies his goals by questioning 'can we recognize and reconstruct private rituals, especially rites of passage, funerary, which are both private and public, and public ones in Etruscan material culture, inscriptions, and Greek and Roman literature' (13). The appendices include a discussion of Livy's description of the *evocatio* of Juno after the Roman victory at Veii in 396 B.C. and a translation of the Iguvine Tablets (139–43).

Many of the subsections are extremely short, for instance the discussions on birth and perinatal rites are each less than a page long. Throughout the chapters, the author acknowledges other scholarly interpretations. For example, in the wedding section, M. admits that even the identification of the sex of the individuals sculpted in low relief on a cippus from Poggio Gaiella has been interpreted differently with contrasting conclusions by J.-R. Jannot (15–19). It is also significant to note that not all of the objects referred to in the discussions are included in the figures; at times, this can hamper the reader's ability to judge the analysis. In numerous instances, excerpts of Latin descriptions of Roman rituals are used to find meaning in Etruscan iconography of much earlier date, suggesting long-term continuity of practice between the two cultures — at least according to the author.

In the chapter on family rituals, M. discusses six areas related to important once-in-a-lifetime events as mentioned above: weddings, births, transition to adulthood, immersion and healing, perinatal rites and adoption, along with two additional categories of divination and consecration. With the aid of a sarcophagus lid from Volterra and two bronze mirrors, an insightful discussion of the Etruscan origins of bullae is created in the transition to adulthood section. In the next

section on immersion and healing, one example of a terracotta baby votive offering from Peciano with sculpted elements of a bulla and a fibula, is interpreted as an indication that the donor intended the living counterpart of the votive to have a career as a *haruspex* due to the incorporation of the latter symbol (34–5). This will seem something of a stretch of the imagination to many readers.

The funerary rituals chapter includes a general overview of funerary practices organized by time period, which acts as a useful reference for any reader who is new to the field. However, M. also ascribes sex to cremation burials according to grave goods: for example, razors equal a male burial and spools equal a female burial (47, 48). As consolation, he offers that ‘the material categories cannot always be used to define the sex of the deceased if male artefacts occur with female, and female with male attributes’ (49), but makes no acknowledgement of the cognitive leap based on the traditional dichotomy of grave goods, which focuses on the narrowest understanding of potential intentions behind donations of grave goods.

The public rituals chapter includes a number of key items: the Tabula Capuana, Liber Linteus Zagrabienensis and information concerning Libri Rituales, as well as discussions of the following rituals: foundations of planned cities, pilgrimages and processions, games, time marking, initiation and apotropaic rites. The discussion of processions for Iuno at Falerii Veteres is based on textual evidence (104–10). This discussion could benefit greatly from incorporation of archaeological evidence of the ritual processions of this cult at Falerii Novi (S. Keay *et al.*, *PBSR* 68 (2000), 1–93).

In the final section, M. concludes that ritual did not consume Etruscan life, and is characterized as ‘highly incidental’ with sometimes daily, monthly or annual occasions (133). I would argue that much of our evidence relates specifically to the heightened occasions of élite Etruscan rituals: inscriptions, votive objects, grave goods, sculpted sarcophagi (all of non-perishable materials) and tomb paintings. Consequently our interpretations of important rituals based on materials involved in important rituals are a self-fulfilling prophecy by virtue of the nature of archaeologically recoverable materials. The frequency, consistency over time and space, or even the perceived importance of particular rituals for Etruscans remains difficult to reconstruct.

This book is a valuable and important contribution to Etruscan studies. It combines different types of evidence to produce new and often alternative interpretations of Etruscan material culture. The larger task of investigating the origins and continuity of Etruscan rituals is stimulating. This book serves to remind us that scholarship on ancient religion and ritual must continue to pursue questions and also acknowledge our limitations in pursuit of progress in what is a marvellously enigmatic field.

Brock University
cmurray@brocku.ca

CARRIE ANN MURRAY

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V. BELLELLI, *LE ORIGINI DEGLI ETRUSCHI. STORIA ARCHEOLOGIA ANTROPOLOGIA. ATTI DEL CONVEGNO* (Studia Archaeologica 186). Rome: ‘L’Erma’ di Bretschneider, 2013. Pp. 496, 139 illus. ISBN 9788882657420. €294.00.

Recent announcements proclaiming major discoveries of ‘Etruscan DNA’ have prompted re-examination of the issue of Etruscan origins, an issue attributable in its origins to Herodotus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and other Greek and Roman — never Etruscan — authors. Today a gap persists between archaeological, epigraphic and linguistic evidence and the ancient texts. Still we are tempted to believe there must be a germ of truth behind the tales — Pallottino looked to the Eneolithic Rinaldone culture for the beginnings of Etruscan *identity*.

A University of Palermo seminar held in Agrigento (9 February 2011) responded to recent controversies in proceedings augmented by a dozen articles covering wide geographic and chronological ranges; they do not claim to present a consensus or even a thorough ‘answer’ to the conundrum.

A compendium of relevant data should be accessible to those in need of a dose of reality to counterbalance the literary sources, especially classicists and ancient historians, not to mention journalists... This volume rather will be of use, for bibliography and nuggets of new material, to archaeologists, but will probably be passed over by others not prepared to negotiate its specialist jargon. Site names and details of chronological schemes will be unfamiliar and off-putting for