

loose argumentation make for limited conclusions, however, and less appeal for those investigating Domna's life and depictions, or even the Severan period overall.

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THE GODDESS OF ERYX

LIETZ (B.) *La dea di Erice e la sua diffusione nel Mediterraneo. Un culto tra Fenici, Greci e Romani.* (Tesi 8.) Pp. xiv + 454, pls. Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2012. Paper, €28. ISBN: 978-88-7642-436-6.

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L. discusses one of the most famous (and debated) cults of ancient Sicily, which has generally attracted scholars' interest for its 'esotic' aura and for its early integration into Roman religion. The heading already reflects the 'pluralistic' approach – really the only one suitable for such a complex matter – applied by L. to the composite deity of Eryx, whose native name remains unknown to us, while certainly every people that adopted her cult labelled the goddess with a familiar name: Astarte for the Carthaginians, Herentas for the Oscans, Venus for the Romans.

L.'s work aims at collecting and analysing all the relevant data: literary and epigraphic sources, numismatic and archaeological evidence. The comprehensive catalogue is easy to consult through numbered entries (80 literary texts, TL; 27 inscriptions, TE; 9 coins, TN) provided with an analytical discussion, a critical apparatus, the quotation and the Italian translation of the literary and epigraphic texts and an updated bibliography. The illustrations are, unfortunately, relatively few (19 plates) and of low quality.

L. rightly begins with a critical review of the modern historiography (Chapter 1), from the Euhemeristic approach traced back to Renaissance Humanism (according to which the goddess was the sharmant local queen Lycastes/Venus, divinised post-mortem by her son Eryx), to the widely accepted nineteenth-century paradigm of the '*Grande madre mediterranea*', and finally to the model of the 'emporic' sanctuaries dedicated to a powerful deity of love and war identifiable as Astarte or Aphrodite. This latter model is reflected by the title of the conference held in 2009 at Erice, *La devozione dei naviganti. Il culto di Afrodite ericina nel Mediterraneo* (edited by E. Acquaro, A. Filippi and S. Medas [2010]), which, unfortunately, has not been taken into consideration for L.'s book. Another recent article has not been included in the discussion (D. Demetriou, 'Τῆς πάσης ναυτιλῆς φύλαξ: Aphrodite and the Sea', *Kernos* 23 [2010], 67–89), though Demetriou's observations on Aphrodite as a patron of seafaring and sexuality together would be helpful in supporting L.'s claim that 'sacred prostitution' – well documented at Eryx, despite controversies over its origins and functions – is not a proof of the 'emporic' cultic model. Notwithstanding L.'s doubts about the 'emporic' nature of the sanctuary of Eryx – more suited to controlling sea routes than to functioning as a meeting point of sailors and traders, due to its location at the top of a hill – the 'maritime' connotation of the cult is confirmed by the literary tradition, according to which the founder hero Eryx was a son of Aphrodite and Poseidon or Boutes (who had been saved from the Sirens by the goddess).

In Chapters 2–3 L. analyses the historical and geographical development of the cult in the sanctuary of Eryx and in Sicily, and outside Sicily (Arcadia, Rome, South Italy, Africa, Rhaetia). Chapter 4 reassembles all the data in a comprehensive overview, dealing with mythological themes – concerning the foundation of the sanctuary and the origins of the

city of Eryx and of the Elymian *ethnos* – and cultic aspects: feasts and sacrificial practices, the ritual use of plants, the association of the goddess with Eros/Cupid – shown by several coins issued at Eryx, and by literary references such as to the Roman ‘succursale’ near the Colline gate (but perhaps not unknown in the sanctuary on Capitoline hill: Suet. *Cal.* 7) – and finally ‘sacred prostitution’. The diachronic analysis draws attention to the transformations of the cult from the fifth (or sixth?) century until the full integration of the goddess of Eryx (by now Venus) in Roman religion (and literature), to the shifts of emphasis related to Augustan ideology and finally to the eclipse of the main Sicilian sanctuary during the Empire. L.’s overview highlights a perfect parallelism between the history of *Erycina*’s cult and the history of its territory of reference, initially widening from the Eryx-Segesta core to western Sicily – besides an interesting offshoot in Arcadia (TL 53), hard to contextualise despite efforts to relate it to mercenarianism, like the exportation of the cult in Campania (a region from which a flow of mercenaries towards the ‘Elymian’ area is well-attested). It was only in the fourth–third centuries that the worship of the goddess of Eryx was really reshaped in a ‘Punic’ sense, both for the unique role of that strong hill-town in the Carthaginian *eparchia* (see now S. De Vincenzo, *Tra Cartagine e Roma. I centri urbani dell’eparchia punica di Sicilia tra VI e I sec. a.C.* [2013]) and for its centrality in the maritime empire of Carthage (see the inscription from Cagliari TE 12, sometimes over-interpreted). The symbolic value of the cult as a reference point on the Sicily–Africa axis will persist until the early Imperial period, as shown by the dedication of L. Apronius Caesianus after the revolt of Tacfarinas (TE 9), by a few prosopographic data (e.g. the involvement of a member of the *gens Cassia* in the cult, TE 14) and above all by the accounts of Athenaeus and Aelianus (TL 54–8). For the more deeply investigated period, following the Roman conquest of Sicily and the acceptance of the goddess in the Urbs, L. gives a detailed and balanced overview of the Ciceronian dossier and of the coeval inscriptions (see previously H. Kunze, *Sicilia, Religionsgeschichte des römischen Sizilien* [2006], pp. 36ff., 151ff., 211–12 with ref.), and briefly summarises the *status quaestionis* concerning the use of the Trojan legend by the Romans. As for the two sanctuaries of *Venus Erycina* at Rome, L. makes some interesting observations about the *votum* of the temple *extra portam Collinam*, made by L. Porcius Licinius during a military campaign in 181 B.C., quoting an unpublished paper by C. Ampolo on the Elymian connections of the Ligurian region involved in that war (‘La dea ericina a Roma e la guerra in Liguria’, presented at the above-quoted conference held at Erice in 2009), and outlines the problems concerning the topographic context and the remains of that sanctuary. Regrettably, however, L. does not deal in depth with the hypothesis that the famous Ludovisi ‘throne’, found in the same area, was transferred to Rome from Eryx – a theory recently supported by M. Torelli (‘Il “Trono Ludovisi” da Erice all’Oriente’, rep. in *ΣΗΜΑΙΝΕΙΝ. Significare. Scritti vari di ermeneutica archeologica* [2012], pp. 463–70) with new arguments for a possible function of the artefact in an ‘Eastern’ epiphany ritual, and by A. Bottini (‘Il Trono Ludovisi: una proposta di ricostruzione’, *Eidola* 6 [2009], 9–32) with technical remarks – taking for granted the alternative view that connects the ‘throne’ with the Marasà temple at Locri.

In general, the archaeology of *Erycina*’s cult is still a ‘grey area’, due to the very sketchy knowledge of the material remains, especially for the main seat of Eryx: so it is a pity that L. has not been able to deal with the data (though limited) presented at the Erice 2009 conference, and in particular with the paper by P. Barresi (‘Il culto di Venere ad Erice in età romana: le testimonianze archeologiche’, in *La devozione dei naviganti*, op. cit., pp. 161–71) concerning the physical remains of the sanctuary. On that basis, one can reject the *communis opinio* (uncritically accepted by L.) that the few architectural pieces in local stone discovered by G. Cultrera testify to the restoration works granted by the emperor

Claudius to the Segestans. As a matter of fact, Barresi infers from them a fully Hellenistic chronology (as already claimed by W. Von Sydow) for the reshaping of the sanctuary with a peristyle (banquet?) building and a somewhat later tetrastyle doric temple (see the coin issued by G. Considius Nonianus in 57 B.C., TN 8).

My critical remarks aim at stimulating further efforts to investigate the materiality of *Erycina's* cult (an important research project on the archaeology of Eryx is being conducted by the University of Berlin under the direction of S. De Vincenzo); they must not overshadow appreciation of L.'s work for the useful collection of information she gives, and the well-balanced synthesis of the problems and facets regarding that 'composite' deity.

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RELIGION, POWER AND SOCIETY IN REPUBLICAN ROME

RÜPKE (J.) *Religion in Republican Rome. Rationalization and Ritual Change*. Pp. vi + 321. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Cased, £45.50, US\$69.95. ISBN: 978-0-8122-4394-9.
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In this exciting work, R. puts forward the thesis that the development of religion at Rome during the Republican period should be understood in terms of progressive rationalisation and systematisation, which are essentially understood as a function of political developments during this time period. It brings together R.'s views on separate, yet related topics concerning, amongst other things, festivals, drama, epic, the calendar, legal documents, antiquarianism and philosophy, in especially the late Republic. Most of the fourteen chapters are based on contributions that have appeared previously, some of these having made a firm impact on the academic discourse already. Nevertheless, the present book as a whole has strong added value, one may say precisely because of its systematisation and rationalisation of R.'s previous views into a cogent and strongly chronologically and contextually embedded argument.

This argument is based on the idea that Max Weber's notion of rationalisation provides a useful tool to describe religious and cultural change in mid and late Republican Rome, especially in the period from c. 300 to 40 B.C. Adopting a substantivist, or relational definition of religion (p. 13), R. argues that the process of rationalisation he envisages can be tracked down in the ordering and systematisation of religious concepts, practices and instruments. Starting in the late-fourth century B.C., processes contingent to political competition would have led to the regulation of aspects of religion and ritual in public, but in turn this 'subjection to discursive control' (p. 1) would have set in motion a new process, in which the rules and principles abstracted from practice were then made the object of a specialised discourse and institutionalisation, eventually producing Roman religion 'as we know it' from the imperial period.

After a general introduction and a chapter on the archaic and early republican background, R. traces this process of change in various realms and wide-ranging case studies. Throughout the chapters, and as part of the central methodology of the book, there is a particular emphasis on the relationship of the development of new media (such as the spread of writing and theatrical performances) and modes of interaction, i.e. on 'arenas