

ATTILIO MASTROCINQUE: *Bona Dea and the Cults of Roman Women*. Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 49. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2014. ISBN 978-3-515-10752-5. 209 pp. EUR 52.

Attilio Mastrocinque's captivating objective is to study the religious initiations of young Roman women who were on the brink of married life. The main question asked in the book is how the cults of Bona Dea, Faunus and Bacchus reinforced female sexuality and fertility, and how these cults initiated the women into adulthood and into marriage in particular.

After a short introduction presenting the research question, the study begins (chapter III) with a discussion of method. The author explains why these particular cults have been selected to be studied and goes on to list recurring features connecting these cults together. This chapter continues with a discussion of how ancient writers viewed contacts between women and the deities. In chapter IV, the author studies what the multiple elements and rituals of the cult of Bona Dea/Fauna signified and what their practical purpose in the lives of Roman women was. In addition, the famous story of the male intruder in the celebrations of Bona Dea, i.e. the Clodian scandal, is discussed in detail. Furthermore, examinations concerning crossdressing and the complementary nature of genders in regard to their religious capabilities shed a new light on the religious practices and ideas of Rome. In the following chapter, the political aspects of the rites of the cults, in particular those of Bona Dea and of Bacchus, are discussed. Finally, the importance of the cults as arenas of political and imperial propaganda is analysed briefly in this context. In chapter VI, the author's point of view moves from the sources concerning Bona Dea to include those which discuss the Greek goddesses Omphale, Demeter and Kore. He analyses how the character and practices of Roman Bona Dea and the cults of Greek origin overlapped. During their youth, women participated in the rituals in order to achieve their goal of becoming wives and mothers and maintaining health and fecundity. Participating in the religious cults was on the one hand a social activity, and on the other hand the cultic rituals seem to have included educative purposes from which unmarried women would benefit.

Bacchus and several other deities, mostly female, are examined in the last two chapters (VII and VIII). Some of these cults, for example the cult of Anna Perenna, were flexible inasmuch as they also allowed male participants in their celebrations of a successful and happy marriage. Chapter IX concludes the study with some rather short, yet valuable, anthropological comparisons between Roman practices and several examples from modern day native cultures.

In this excellently executed work, there is one annoying mistake which seems to be caused by the printing process rather than by the author himself. On pages 178-79 (and in note 206), the text ends prematurely leaving the reader wondering if there should have been more discussion about the Vestal virgins and their social and sexual status. Suitably enough, taking into account the subjects of the study, there are numerous pictures and photographs, and good-quality tables. Each illustration is provided with an appropriate caption, and textual references to the illustrations are often found on the same page as the pictures.

Although the question of the age of marriage would be essential for an understanding of the female course of life in the Roman world, the study omits this particular subject. Instead, it concentrates on discussing the cultic practices and offers the reader an insight into the question of how the Romans interpreted the world of gods and goddesses, and how the old myths and

traditions were experienced in their daily lives or in the rituals of initiation. This study is not simply an impressive and interesting collection of evidence concerning the cult of Bona Dea and the other cults, it is also a thorough evaluation of women's, especially young maiden's, roles and of the importance of their religious participation in the Roman world. We are too often inclined to view young Roman women as an asexual and socially quiet group that becomes noticeable only with marriage and motherhood, after which their life actually starts. However, as Mastrocinque's study shows us, the youth of Roman women was an active period of life which prepared them and initiated them into adulthood. Thus, young women were participants, not bystanders, during these important, yet sensitive, years.

*Outi Sihvonen*

JUSTIN ST. P. WALSH: *Consumerism in the Ancient World: Imports and Identity Construction*. Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies. Routledge, New York – London 2014. ISBN 978-0-415-89379-4 (hb). XVIII, 218 pp. USD 140, GBP 85.

As I myself work with the concept of identity the title of this book instantly raised my curiosity, especially the reference to "identity construction". I was not the only one interested in its themes, since my colleague was eager to borrow the book and I had to remind him to return it in order to be able to write this review! This just shows how popular and timely this topic is, and even more so in this book, which combines it with the study of the distribution of imported Greek pottery in an area stretching from Portugal to Switzerland, as well as discussing 'consumerism', and applying Geographical Information Systems.

The complexity of the themes and the extent of the ground covered are clear from the titles of the chapters: The background and the theoretical and methodological framework is covered in Chapters 1–5, all of 124 pages (including the end notes). The analysis of the dataset is described in Chapter 6, in 45 pages of text and figures. The discussion and conclusions are in Chapter 7, in 11 pages.

In order to set the stage for his analysis, Walsh gives an outline of the Greek colonisation in the west in Chapter 2, and covers the most significant sites, including both the Greek colonies and the main indigenous sites in Chapter 3. He then develops the theoretical basis for understanding the consuming of Greek pottery and discusses the concepts of identity and consumption in Chapter 4. In chapter 5 he presents different approaches to Greek pottery in the past and present, including the research methods of functional pottery studies.

This long introductory section is a good introduction to various topics, ranging from the site descriptions of Emporion (as named in the text but presented as Ampurias in the Appendix) and Asberg, to Hellenisation and network analysis. Whilst the bibliography is limited, it covers the key articles and books, such as Hall's,<sup>1</sup> Hodos's<sup>2</sup> and Van Dommelen's<sup>3</sup> work, and thus Chapters 1–5 can

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, Cambridge 2000.

<sup>2</sup> T. Hodos, *Local Responses to Colonization in the Iron Age Mediterranean*, London – New York 2006.

<sup>3</sup> P. Van Dommelen, "Ambiguous matters: colonialism and local identities in Punic Sardinia", in C. L. Lyons –