

Multiperiod

Situating Artemis and Aphrodite between ancient practices and modern scholarship

Ruth M. Léger. *Artemis and her cult*. pp vi +178, thirteen colour plates. Oxford: Archaeopress 2017. ISBN 978-1-78491-550-6 paperback £30.

Martin Eckert. *Die Aphrodite der Seefahrer und ihre Heiligtümer am Mittelmeer. Archäologische Untersuchungen zu interkulturellen Kontaktzonen am Mittelmeer in der späten Bronzezeit und frühen Eisenzeit*. pp 600 + colour figs throughout. Berlin: LIT Verlag 2016. ISBN 978-364313-510-0 paperback €79.90.

Artemis and Aphrodite occupied an important place in ancient Greek society and despite a very long tradition of scholarship into Greek beliefs, the divine world of the Greeks has lost nothing of its attraction for contemporary scholars, as testify two recently published books, both the result of the respective author's PhD research.

The first book is dedicated to Artemis and her cult, and focusses on the sanctuaries of Sparta, Ephesus, Tegea and to a lesser extent, Brauron. The cult in Tegea was in reality dedicated to Athena, but the close relationship to Artemis justifies, according to the author, the inclusion in a study on this goddess. The second book takes a different approach and aims at discussing Aphrodite in her aspect of a goddess of sailors in the Mediterranean. Both books provide an opportunity to take a closer look at different scholarly approaches to ancient beliefs, as well as to the ancient practices that mediated the veneration of certain divine figures themselves.

In the introduction to her book, Ruth Léger explains that looking at how and when the cult of Artemis took shape materially and socially help her to define the cult of Artemis better in general terms. She seeks to understand the relationship between cult and community and the ways in which rituals differ in the Artemis cults she studies. The underlying hypothesis is that the cults are an expression of local identity that manifests itself in architecture and archaeology.

The author combines written sources with a study of architecture, material remains of cult practices,

iconography and epigraphic and numismatic sources. The availability of the sources for the study differ between the case studies, which is partly a consequence of research history, but partly due to idiosyncracies in the local practices related to the cult.

After the first introductory chapter in which Léger specifies the general premises of her study and the availability of various sources at the sites, follow five more chapters, which outline the status quaestionis regarding the study of Artemis, the attestations of the cult at the various sites, common material features shared between the case studies, and shared cult practices. She concludes with general observations on how her case studies contribute to an improved understanding of Artemis in Greek culture. The book ends with 24 appendices that include maps, figures, plans, tables of finds and two short additional texts on the origin of the Spartan masks and the legend of Telephos.

In the second chapter, Léger explores the various names and aspects that are usually associated with Artemis. Artemis is attributed the roles of mother of the gods, especially in Mycenaean times and in Phrygia. Most frequently, however, she was seen as goddess of the wilderness, animals and hunting. The goddess is frequently depicted as Potnia Theron, Mistress of Animals and she sometimes co-occurs with Gorgons. Artemis is also a goddess of birth, infants, children and sometimes young animals and was especially important in rites of passage into adulthood and marriage. Dances seem to have been particularly important in her cult and she possessed a bloodthirsty aspect as the sacrifices of Iphigeneia and the daughter of Bellerophon demonstrate.

The ways in which these various aspects combine in local cults is explored in the third chapter. The cult site at Orthia in Sparta seems to have been installed in the Geometric period. To this time dates the earliest pottery, which was associated with an ash altar. In the next centuries, the cult site was gradually developed with a sequence of altars and temples. A theatre was added in the 3rd century AD, but even before that, provisions for seating existed.

Apart from pottery, large numbers of figurines were dedicated by the worshippers. These varied greatly in type and the author rearranges existing classifications into a new order to make comparisons with the other case studies possible. Most frequently, a woman or a female goddess was depicted, but other human figures also occurred, as well as animals. Particular to the Orthia cult is

the use of masks, for which Léger also proposes a new classification. Previous scholars have suggested that the masks were used for theatre performances, but Léger prefers to establish a connection with rites of passage. More than in any other sanctuary in Greece, the celebrants dedicated bone and ivory carvings. Small lead figurines of various types were also numerous.

Inscriptions reveal that the goddess venerated at the site was normally called Orthia, rather than Artemis. Only in Flavian inscriptions were Orthia and Artemis considered as one and the same figure. Léger, however, thinks that the association took place before that date. Based on artefacts, she suggests that this might have happened as early as the 6th century BCE. At that time, a number of changes occur in the sanctuary. But despite the construction of a new altar and temple, the importance of the sanctuary seems to have decreased. Fewer and less carefully made objects were now dedicated. The depiction of the goddess also changed from Potnia Theron in the earlier phases to Artemis with a deer in the later phases. An explanation might be that the Spartans increasingly focused on a military ideology and adapted the Artemis cult to this.

The cult site in Ephesus has evidence that dates back much further than Sparta. The earliest material dates to the 13th century BCE. Partial publication of the excavations has resulted in unequal attention being paid to the archaic period, whereas other periods remain underexplored. At least from the Early Iron Age (11th - 8th century BCE) cult activity is confirmed. A shrine, and associated pottery and votives are known. The destruction of this site by a flood led to the construction of a new shrine-like naikos in the Geometric period. Through the centuries, a sequence of altars, three platforms and co-existing shrines, later replaced by a single temple, existed. In the 6th century BCE, the 'Croesus' temple, which reputedly burnt down on the night of Alexander the Great's birth was built, and its Hellenistic successor was considered one of the Seven World Wonders.

The Ephesian cult practices included the deposition of pottery. In the earlier phases, most vessels were used for feasting, but later, miniature vessels were dedicated to the goddess. Important was the deposition of silver and gold objects, mostly jewellery and dress items. The appliquées found at Ephesus have no parallels elsewhere. Bronze items, mostly belts but also tripods, were popular, in addition to ivory and terracotta statuettes.

Inscriptions testify to the existence of a festival in which prizes were given to competing athletes and musicians. Decrees of citizenship were exhibited in

the sanctuary. The inscriptions also testify to a link with the cult of Dionysos. Particular at Ephesus was the existence of a priest class, the Megabyzoi, who oversaw the cult activities. It is unclear, however, if the mysteries associated with the veneration of the Ephesian Artemis existed from the very beginning, or if they were introduced at a later date.

Not dedicated to Artemis but to Athena, was the cult site at Alea. The close association to Artemis of this goddess venerated at Tegea, is compelling enough for Léger, to include the site in her study. The cult site might have been in use as early as the 11th century BCE, although firm evidence dates only to the 10th century BCE, when a votive pit was in use. An altar, dating to this early phase, was not found, but a sequence of altars was used in later periods. At least three wattle-and-daub buildings were used in the 8th century BCE. After this date, they were replaced first by an Archaic and then a Hellenistic temple. The sculptor Skopas famously built the last one.

The 8th century BCE sanctuary was provided with a metal workshop, which might have been responsible for the numerous bronze votive gifts found in the site. Many of the bronzes represent Athena as Mistress of Animals and the site has yielded the largest number of geometric deer figurines, bird figurines and stamp pendants in the Greek world. Lead figures were also found, but were less numerous than at Sparta. They refer to the Potnia Theron and Kouritrophos and might have come from Sparta. Likewise, bone and ivory carvings might have come from Sparta.

Only very few inscriptions shed light on the cult, but from the archaeological evidence it seems that a local goddess, Alea, was initially venerated at the site. Alea had various aspects that partly relate to the Potnia Theron, partly to the warlike aspects of Athena, even though she lacked some of the other warlike characteristics known elsewhere. Alea became associated with Athena only in the 7th or 6th century BCE and the aggression of the Spartans might be responsible for the link with Athena rather than Artemis, who played an important role in Spartan society. In all but name, however, Alea resembled Artemis.

In the next chapter, Léger describes the common features in the cult practices shared among the case studies. Similarities exist in the placing and monumentalisation of the cult sites. The sites were located at the edge of town, and the cults definitely possessed a liminal aspect. As such, they were important in rites of passage. The cults at the sites belonged to a group of old pre-Classical cults

that became most often associated with Demeter, Artemis or Athena.

Goats, cattle, sheep, pigs, donkey, dogs, deer and birds were most commonly sacrificed in her honour. Jewellery and small valuables were the most common category of items dedicated by worshippers, followed by figurines. Small figurative representations most often depicted a female or goddess, often as Potnia Theron. Human figures were both male and female. Most scholars wrongly assume that female deities were worshipped mostly by women and thus received female figurines. This study clearly shows that men were frequently depicted, naked, on horseback or as warriors. Artemis thus played an important role in the life of young men and in the training they received to become a warrior. She played a key role in rites of passage of boys and girls into adulthood. In Brauron, boys did not participate, but they had their own sanctuary, at Halae Araphenides, nearby.

A conclusion summarises the results regarding the cult of Artemis, with the aim of situating it into a broader context of Greek society and religion. A crucial observation, stressed by the author, is that none of the cults were static, but changed through time. Local deities became increasingly associated with pan-Hellenic Artemis with whom they shared many aspects. As a result, the various cults of Artemis were highly idiosyncratic, as the local specificities continued to play a role in cult practices. The most striking surviving aspects are the Potnia Theron and association with fertility. But despite the similarities, Léger stresses that there is no simple or single answer to the question who Artemis really was.

Despite being rather thin and published by a primarily archaeological publisher (Archeopress), this booklet constitutes a solid piece of work through its summarising and comparing all available evidence and by the carefully formulated and nuanced conclusions. Because of its detailed treatment of the selected case studies, the book provides an important addition to existing extensive but often generalising books on Artemis and/or Greek beliefs. The necessity to situate a cult in its local context and dissect local practices for idiosyncrasies and transformations through time are highlighted, and all scholars with an interest in the sites discussed or in Greek cult practices in general will enjoy reading this book.

The approach in the book stands in sharp contrast to the one adopted in the next book. The second book reviewed here is dedicated to Aphrodite, specifically in her role of goddess of sailors throughout the Mediterranean.

As the author explains, Aphrodite cult places are found near harbours and in harbour cities throughout the Mediterranean. Several epithets associate Aphrodite with the sea, sailors and harbours. The very ancient and Mediterranean-wide distribution of Aphrodite and goddesses associated with Aphrodite seems to indicate that she had a special connection to sailors and was introduced by them into regions where she was previously unknown. As such, Aphrodite sanctuaries might be seen as contact sanctuaries, as places of international encounter and cultural exchange. This is the central hypothesis that the author wishes to explore.

The author approaches his study with a chapter dedicated to methods and problems encountered when conducting this type of analysis. He adds another chapter with background on seafaring and trade in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Bronze and Iron Ages. Then follows a lengthy catalogue, next a chapter on the context and iconography of seafaring gods in the Ancient World and finally a concluding chapter. The book is richly illustrated with high-quality colour images, a separate map showing the sites discussed in the catalogue, three tables on Mediterranean chronology, associated gods and a summary of the cult sites discussed in the catalogue. The book lacks an index.

On a methodological level, the author begins with an outline of the criteria used to compose the catalogue. The problem of identifying the 'real' Aphrodite is problematic, he underlines, especially on Cyprus. The island was an international centre of trade already in the Bronze Age, but only in the 8th - 7th century BCE do we find references to the name Aphrodite. Because of the importance of Aphrodite sanctuaries as an 'international' place of encounter, between Europe, Asia and Africa, the author finds a solution in collecting in the catalogue not only known Aphrodite sites (as elsewhere in the catalogue) but also in identifying all locations where a ship could potentially land. Sites where Aphrodite was introduced only at a later date, e.g. Thasos, are left out. The catalogue is composed according to a number of formal criteria to identify cult sites: key characteristics are: an organised space, the presence of cult-related objects or other iconographic characteristics.

The short methodological chapter is followed by a more substantial one that is divided in two parts: Bronze Age and Iron Age. The author discusses the geography of the Mediterranean, ship construction in the Bronze and Iron Age, and general characteristics of harbours in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the chapter seeks to identify the objects that were traded, and seeks to establish the identity of the carriers of the objects

in the Bronze Age. Next, the author proceeds with discussing the same topics for the Iron Age. During the Iron Age, the Phoenicians come to the fore as active sailors and together with Greek colonists, they established the context for the Aphrodite cults that are studied by the author. A last section in the chapter is devoted to emporia and the role of harbour sanctuaries.

The fourth chapter comprises an extensive catalogue of sites in the Western and Central Mediterranean, the Greek mainland, the Aegean, Crete, Asia Minor (incl. the Black Sea) and Egypt and Cyprus. The author lists for the sites the available written sources, epigraphic evidence, date and a description of the architecture and location of the sanctuary.

After the catalogue, the author includes a substantial chapter on the context and iconography of seafaring gods. He discusses broader patterns of these seafaring gods, especially those that are related to love or are depicted naked (la déesse nue, or Ishtar). According to the author, a special link existed between Aphrodite, sailors and seafaring, because of the presence of prostitutes in Aphrodite sanctuaries. Gods and goddesses of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria and Canaan, Cyprus, Crete and Greece are thus reviewed.

The last, concluding chapter seeks to compare and evaluate the rich evidence collected. Many of the sanctuaries appear to display some Cypriot characteristics and the author suggests that Aphrodite sanctuaries were situated at regular intervals along the major Mediterranean trade routes. Phoenicians, he concludes, therefore introduced the cult and its infrastructure to provide for sailors conducting their trade. Aphrodite, continues the author, is associated with many other gods as the result of overlapping functions, such as the warrior aspect, shared with Ishtar. The author identifies generally two types of sanctuaries, open court sanctuaries, and closed ones. Most sanctuaries had additional facilities for the worshippers, such as bothroi, hestiatoria, stoa etc. From the rich iconography, the authors identifies the sex aspect and the warrior aspect as most central, although many other depictions existed simultaneously.

A large part of the chapter is dedicated to the question whether the Aphrodite cult can be associated with institutionalised prostitution. Although prostitution was indeed associated with some Aphrodite cults, the author concludes, after reviewing his evidence, that it was unlikely to have been a regular practice. Rather, the goddess' dual character of goddess of violence versus goddess of free love tapped into primeval notions of tabu

on incest, marriage and sexuality, as proposed by Lévi-Strauss. Aphrodite was carried overseas by sailors and traders and adapted to local requirements. Initial practices of prostitution that existed could not be maintained claims the author, but the cult remained as a connecting factor in the Mediterranean and facilitated intercultural contact.

Overall, this book appears to fit into an established academic tradition, very much alive in certain continental European universities, in which compiling a catalogue, loosely organised around a central question, constitutes the main aim of a PhD thesis. Success of the research is then measured in terms of the size of the catalogue and the extent to which the argument can be stretched to include entries that may or may not be related to the research question.

Critical analysis in this type of study is almost always absent. Where the previous book discussed in this review questions unified notions of a pan-Hellenic Artemis and stressed how local idiosyncrasies caused differentiation, the present book does not question the identity of Aphrodite, and represents her as a single, static and bounded cult figure, an amalgam of gods and goddesses, shared by all cultures in the Ancient World.

A lack of critical analysis and the aim of compiling a large catalogue results in the inclusion of a number of irrelevant entries. Thus, we find several inland Aphrodite sanctuaries (e.g. Erice, several sites in Boeotia) that have nothing to do with harbours. Several of the cult sites cited are not Aphrodite sanctuaries, but just happen to be located at a harbour or related to a female goddess. What then the focus of this book is, remains unclear to the reviewer. Does this book addresses female goddesses associated with sailors and seafaring, or goddesses associated with love, or seafaring and associated cults in general or just all Aphrodite sanctuaries?

The seemingly 'sensational' treatment of Aphrodite as a goddess of sex, free love and prostitution appears to be directed at a broader, non-academic public, which might indeed find pleasure in the very broad discussion of ancient ships, seafaring and naked goddesses in the Ancient World, as well as the numerous high-quality images. The superficial treatment of the argument excludes a specialist readership on ancient cult or intercultural interactions.

Very unfortunate for recommending this book to any readership is the state of the catalogue. Several of the entries are not listed in numerical sequence

or occur twice, e.g. p. 72-73 lists 1.1 Cap des Creus, 1.2. Sagunt, 1.4 Pyrgi then 1.2 Sagunt (again), 1.3 Gravisca. This type of error is repeated throughout the catalogue. To add to the confusion, on several of the pages, the text does not follow on the next page as one would logically expect in any book, but is to be found on the back of the next page or even several pages further: e.g. p. 76 lists entry 1.5 Rom with a brief section from Marcus Servius' comment on the Aeneid. The text does not continue on p. 77 but on p. 78! Page 77 describes the sanctuary of Pyrgi (again, after a brief entry on p. 72).

It is very disappointing for the author, who has no doubt dedicated a great deal of time to this study, that something has gone seriously wrong with the editing of the manuscript. Regretfully, the problem is a normal outcome of a tradition of academic publishing in which publishing houses cannot provide support to authors in the preparation of their manuscript.

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Oliver Henry, and Ute Kelp (eds) *Tumulus as Sema. Space, Politics, Culture and Religion in the First Millennium BC* (Topoi: Berlin Studies of the Ancient World 27). pp. xxxiv+1130. Berlin: De Gruyter. ISBN 978-3-11-026750-1 e-publication €239

Tumulus as Sema is a weighty contribution to scholarship. With 755 pages of text and 377 of plates arranged into two hardbound volumes, its publication was an ambitious undertaking just in terms of sheer scale. The intellectual ambition that this volume represents, however, is even more impressive.

The book, as well as the 2009 conference on which it is based, has a central aim which initially appears to be modest. This aim is to stimulate discussion of tumuli as both landscape features and socio-cultural phenomena in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and neighbouring regions of Eurasia during the first millennium BC. Stimulating discussion between such a diverse group of scholars is no mean feat, however. The geographical range covered by these papers is broad; the chronological spread considerable; and the contributors work in fourteen different countries, eleven different languages, and a spectrum of different scholarly

traditions. Generating any kind of coherence from such diversity is tough.

Yet, over the course of its forty-two chapters, the book manages to grasp this illusive coherence. A reader working through it systematically will be rewarded by a growing understanding not just of specific regions or individual examples, but also of tumuli as a broader cross-cultural phenomenon. As with any similar edited volume however, this book will also be a resource for those seeking to dip in and out of it on a paper-by-paper basis. This is helped by its structure. After an extremely brief foreword by the editors, there are two short introductory papers by Alcock and Naso. These are followed by forty research papers, organised into regional sections: Southern Mediterranean; Greece, Albania and Macedonia; Thrace; Asia Minor; Northern Black Sea; and Eurasia. This geographical arrangement makes the book easy to consult, and doubtless most of its readers will alight, magpie-like, on individual chapters or sections.

There is, of course, much to be gained by approaching the book in such a way. The individual contributions are, as ever with conference proceedings, variable in content, approach, and tone; but the overall standard of the papers is high. Almost all present important new material and/or analysis, and contain valuable new insights. For most of the regions covered, this book offers the reader an excellent way into the relevant literature as well as a sense of the cutting edge of research. Regions that are particularly well covered are Thrace (9 papers); and west-central Anatolia (11 papers).

It is also possible to cherry-pick your way through the papers according to their content and focus. Several papers present the results of new excavations and surveys (e.g. Amore; Chichikova; Tonkova; Rose and Körpe; Luke and Roosevelt; Ronchetta; Thierry; Daragan; van Hoof and Schlöffel). The raw data contained in these papers is extremely useful, as is the reflective discussion also offered by most of these authors. In a similar vein, other papers present regional or chronological surveys (Stoyanov and Stoyanov; Yıldırım; Hüliden; Sivas and Sivas). Most papers, however, offer reassessments of previously-known archaeological material to shed light on a range of social dynamics. By far the largest group of papers focuses on territoriality and the politics of building tumuli (Carstens; Bejko; Martin-McAuliffe; Schmidt-Dounas; Stamatopoulou; Agre; Dichev; Scardozzi; Kelp). A somewhat smaller group of papers consider what might be learned from tumuli about cultural interaction (Delemen; Rabadjiev; Henry; Diler; Hürmüzlü; Doonan), gender roles (Georgieva), and social organisation (Liebhart, Darbyshire, Erder