CONVERGENCE OF BYZANTINE, ARABIC AND LATIN CIVILIZATIONS


ERICE-SICILY: 5 - 11 OCTOBER 2006

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PROGRAMME AND LECTURERS

Le minorenné e il programma di un regno “ecumenico”, sec. XII-XV
• H. BRESC, Università Paris X, Nanterre, F
Legal Learning and the Professionalization of Law (I)
Legal Ethics: A Ghost Story (II)
• J.A. BRUNDADE, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA
Legislazione e giustizia nel “Regnum Siciliae” (I)
L’amministrazione finanziaria centrale tra Svevi e Angioini (II)
• M. CARAVALE, Università di Roma “La Sapienza”, I
Tra Aragona e Mezzogiorno d’Italia: La scienza del diritto (I)
La protimesi dall’esperienza bizantina fino all’età aragonesi (II)
• E. CORTESÓ, Università di Roma “La Sapienza”, I
Interpretazioni giuridico-amministrative sui villani di Sicilia (La legge di un arabaista) (II)
I funzionali del Palazzo normanno: possibili confronti e suggestioni dall’Egitto fatimita (I)
• A.M. DE SIMONE, Università di Palermo, I
Istituzioni di origine bizantina nel Regno normanno-svevo (II)
• V. von FALKENHAUSEN, Università di Roma II, I
The invention of the “Surgeonic style” in Norman Sicily (I)
The painted ceilings of the Cappella Palatina and their Islamic models (II)
• J. JONES, The Khalili Research Centre for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East, Oxford, UK

POETIC TOUCH

According to legend, Erice, son of Venus and Neptune, founded a small town on top of a mountain (750 metres above sea level) more than three thousand years ago. The founder of modern history — i.e. the recording of events in a methodic and chronological sequence as they really happened without reference to mythical causes — the great Thucydides (~500 B.C.), writing about events connected with the conquest of Troy (~1185 B.C.) said: «After the fall of Troy some Trojans on their escape from the Achaei arrived in Sicily by boat and as they settled near the border with the Sicilians all together they were named Hylians: their towns were Segesta and Erice.» This inspired Virgil to describe the arrival of the Trojan royal family in Erice and the burial of Anchise, by his son Enea, on the coast below Erice. Homer (~1000 B.C.), Theocritus (~300 B.C.), Polybius (~200 B.C.), Virgil (~50 B.C.), Horace (~20 B.C.), and others have celebrated this magnificent spot in Sicily in their poems. During seven centuries (XIII-XIX) the town of Erice was under the leadership of a local oligarchy, whose wisdom assured a long period of cultural development and economic prosperity which in turn gave rise to the many churches, monasteries and private palaces which you see today.

In Erice you can admire the Castle of Venus, the Cyclopean Walls (~800 B.C.) and the Gothic Cathedral (~1300 A.D.). Erice is at present a mixture of ancient and medieval architecture. Other masterpieces of ancient civilization are to be found in the neighborhood: at Motya (Phoenician), Segesta (Elymian), and Selinunte (Greek). On the Aegadian Islands — theatre of the decisive naval battle of the first Punic War (264-241 B.C.) — suggestive neolithic and paleolithic vestiges are still visible: the grottoes of Farigna, the carvings and mounds of Levanzo. Splendid beaches are to be found at San Vito Lo Capo, Scopello, and Corino, and a wild and rocky coast around Monte Cofano: all at less than one hour’s drive from Erice.

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