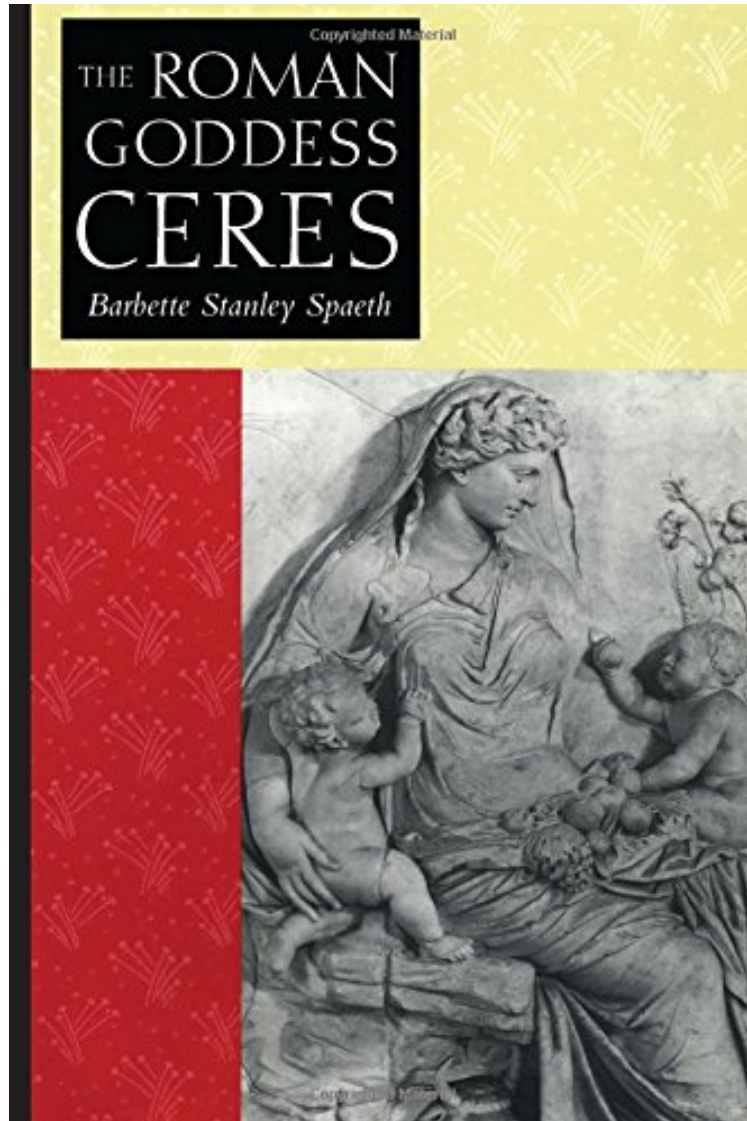


[FREE] The Roman Goddess Ceres

The Roman Goddess Ceres

Barbette Stanley Spaeth

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Interest in goddess worship is growing in contemporary society, as women seek models for feminine spirituality and wholeness. New cults are developing around ancient goddesses from many cultures, although their modern adherents often envision and interpret the goddesses very differently than their original worshippers did. In this thematic study of the Roman goddess Ceres, Barbette Spaeth explores the rich complexity of meanings and functions that grew up around the goddess from the prehistoric period to the Late Roman Empire. In particular, she examines two major concepts, fertility and liminality, and two social categories, the plebs and women, which were inextricably linked with Ceres in the Roman mind. Spaeth then analyzes an image of the goddess in a relief of the Ara Pacis, an important state monument of the Augustan period, showing how it incorporates all these varied roles and associations of Ceres. This interpretation represents a new contribution to art history. With its use of literary, epigraphical, numismatic, artistic, and archaeological evidence, *The Roman Goddess Ceres* presents a more encompassing view of the goddess than was previously available. It will be important reading for all students of Classics, as well as for a general audience interested in New Age, feminist, or pagan spirituality.

About the Author Barbette Stanley Spaeth is Associate Professor of Classical Studies at Tulane University in New Orleans.