



**LA BESTIA**  
di Carlo Palermo

**Memoir Descriptive Of  
The Resources,  
Inhabitants, And  
Hydrography, Of Sicily  
And Its Islands,  
Interspersed With  
Antiquarian And Other  
Notices**



**WILLIAM HENRY SMYTH**





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DESCRIPTIVE OF THE  
**RESOURCES, INHABITANTS, AND HYDROGRAPHY,**  
OF  
**SICILY AND ITS ISLANDS,**

INTERSPERSED WITH  
**ANTIQUARIAN AND OTHER NOTICES.**

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Frontespizio del libro di William Henry Smyth e pagina dedicata a Erice in cui l'autore parla dell'altezza del Monte San Giuliano, di «two thousand one hundred and seventy-five feet».





the circumstance of being the place where John of Procida, Palmerio of Trapani, and their followers, debated and planned the memorable Sicilian Vespers in 1282. In the appearance of these rocks there is nothing to justify the assertion, as they are low, craggy, and exposed; still it is certain the citizens of Trapani were very zealous in the affair, and received Peter, King of Arragon, and Constance, his Queen, with the most joyful acclamations.

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Eryx. — At a little distance to the eastward of Trapani, is Mount St. Julian, the once-renowned Eryx, on which, at the elevation of (two thousand one hundred and seventy-five feet,) stood a temple dedicated to Venus Erycina, the most sensual of all the heathen establishments, and one of the most magnificent, the revenues of several cities having been appropriated to the support of its guards, soothsayers, and priestesses; the latter of whom were selected from among the most beautiful women of the island. The pure air and extensive prospect, combined with the fascinating ceremonies, and voluptuous dances, of the Anagogia, and Crostystris, rendered it the resort of all the debauchees, whose wealth enabled them to partake of its gratifications; and even consuls, praetors, and other magistrates, joined the general revelries. Eryx is at present an abrupt and sterile mountain, with but few vestiges of its former magnificence; those still existing are principally a few granite pillars, and some remains of a Cyclopiian wall, which being the work of Dædalus, are pronounced to be the oldest masonry in Sicily; there is also a kind of cistern, now dry and filled with weeds and brambles, in the castle court, called the well of Venus; and coins, vases, amphore and patens are frequently found, as are also many leaden bullets, for slings, inscribed with imprecations. Wild pigeons still resort there, notwithstanding attempts have been made to destroy them, as symbols of the Pagan rites.