

## BOOK REVIEW

*Inscriptions and their Uses in Greek and Latin Literature*. Edited by PETER LIDDEL and POLLY LOW. Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 416 + 13 illus. Hardcover, \$185.00. ISBN 978-0-19-966574-7.

Peter Liddel and Polly Low have done us all a great service by assembling this extremely useful and well-produced volume of essays. The project began with an idea to build a database of references to and quotations from inscriptions in ancient writers. Multiple questions arose in the process of assembling those references, and the attempt to answer those questions led to a conference in 2009. That conference in turn led to this book.

The volume opens with a twenty-nine page introduction that is designed to accomplish two goals: (1) to introduce some of the problems associated with epigraphy embedded in ancient literature; and (2) to introduce briefly the particular articles in this collection. As for the first goal, the editors found during a 2009 conference that current scholarship concerning epigraphy in ancient literature addressed issues of concern principally to epigraphists as they restore and discuss epigraphical texts, to historians as they try to reconstruct the course of events and the accuracy of sources, and to literary critics as they concern themselves with the niceties of phrasing and diction. But they also found that all of this work was difficult to access as it is scattered in various journals.

The present volume is meant to bring together a sufficiently broad sampling of such work as to provide scholars a starting point for current trends in all three areas. In regard to the second goal, the editors have done a fine job of condensing the sometimes complex arguments in the seventeen contributions into a few sentences each. Such an aid makes the book even more useful for quick reference. Beyond that, the bibliographies provided with each essay make for ease of use for those only interested in one or another of the many topics covered in the book. Several of the essays overlap Greek and Latin literature, particularly those of David Langslow on archaic Latin inscriptions, and Alexei Zadorojnyi on inscriptions in narratives.

The book is divided into two sections. The first deals essentially with the use of inscriptions in historical contexts, the second with inscriptions in literary contexts. The opening article in the collection takes the introduction a bit further by asking how ancient people would have viewed inscriptions beyond their immediate context and use. The next six essays address specific writers and/or topics in historical epigraphy including Herodotus (Elizabeth Kosmetatou), and Pausanias (Yannis Tzifopoulos), as well as the use of psephismata in biographical writing (Matthias Haake) and how inscriptions inform our understanding of Delphi with special reference to the fourth century (Manuela Mari). Tzifopoulos's essay on Pausanias is particularly welcome as it provides such a clearly written and thoroughly well-documented introduction to Pausanias's constant and varied use of inscriptions.

The essays in the second section of the book range from the more traditional literary study of Joseph Day (one of the best in the collection), to the incredibly useful study of Julia Lougovaya on inscriptions and theaters (also a superbly written and very well-organized introduction to a long neglected aspect of epigraphy), to the more theoretically informed study by Martin Dinter of the relation between literary and epigraphical epigram in Latin literature. The essay by Jocelyn Nelis-Clément and Damien Nelis offers a concise, insightful introduction to the close relationship between literature and epigraphy in the Augustan period. The volume closes with a discussion by Alexei Zadorojnyi on the nature of epigraphy in Graeco-Roman narratives. Zadorojnyi covers a broad range of writers in just seventeen pages, and condenses a great deal of thought on theory in his observations on such varied writers as Petronius, Apollonius of Tyre, and Dio of Prusa.

Epigraphy touches almost every aspect of classics at some point and by its very nature it is closely connected to literature. The editors have displayed careful thought in assembling a collection that demonstrates clearly that close connection. Not only are the essays well done, but, at the risk of using an overworked term, the footnotes provide a veritable goldmine of information. The volume should become the standard handbook on the subject, and one can only hope that it will be regularly updated. It is difficult to offer anything other than praise for this collection. The remarkably high price may keep some readers from purchasing the book; perhaps Oxford will release a soft-bound edition that will mitigate that factor. In any event, university libraries should not be without it.

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