

## BOOK REVIEW

*Greek Historical Inscriptions 478-404 B.C.* Edited by ROBIN OSBORNE and P. J. RHODES. New York, NY and Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xxxvi + 629. Hardcover, \$195. ISBN 978-0-199-57547-3.

For the past half-century, anglophone students and teachers of Greek history wanting a manageable selection from the mass of available epigraphic evidence have relied on “ML”: *Greek Historical Inscriptions to the end of the fifth century B.C.* (Oxford 1969, reissued with addenda 1988), by Russell Meiggs and David Lewis. Itself an updating of the successive editions (1933, 1946) of the first volume of M. N. Tod’s similar selection, ML here begins the process of giving way, likewise, to a successor project – the work, just as in 1969, of two leading historians of the ancient Greek world.

Peter Rhodes and Robin Osborne had already, in 2003, given us “RO” (*Greek Historical Inscriptions 404-323 B.C.*: Oxford), an enlarged and improved successor to the second volume of Tod. Now their joint efforts have produced the pre-emptive second part, a heptakontaetia’s-worth, of an emerging “OR.” (note the inversion of names). Its numbers begin at 101, a Syracusan document of c. 474/3 B.C. The fact that OR nos. 1–100 will eventually supersede ML nos. 1–28 reveals already the lavish coverage we can expect for the Archaic period. Meanwhile, now, the relevant comparison is between ML nos. 29–95 and OR nos. 101–195.

From the Contents pages (vii–x) and, again, the “Concordance of Standard Editions” (579–581) it is easy to see that some two-thirds of the Osborne and Rhodes documents are taken over from ML, with the remainder newly-chosen. A little more work is required to establish that three familiar Athenian items from ML have failed to make the cut: their nos. 47 (treaty with Kolophon), 60 (Propylaia accounts) and 66 (resettlement of Poteidaia). In the context of an omni-purpose selection they are no great loss.

One’s attention is naturally drawn first to the “new” material here. In keeping with modern-day preferences it has evidently been chosen, at least in part, to offset what might otherwise have been the dominance of Athenian state decrees.

Though Osborne and Rhodes do in fact present even more of these than ML had (see e.g. nos. 108, 116, 136, 161, 162, 165, 167, 178), their broader conception of what constitutes an important “historical” – and “Greek” – inscription manifests itself in the inclusion of other kinds of Athenian state documents (190: trireme crews, 412–405), Athenian documents from sub-state level (demes: 107, 146, 159), and above all the enhanced provision of non-Athenian items. This reviewer would have welcomed the reinstatement of Tod no. 34 (discarded by ML), from mid-5<sup>th</sup>-century Ozolian Lokris, but there is ample compensation in (e.g.) nos. 103–104 (Thasos), 115 (Selinous), 118 (Thetonia, in southern Thessaly), 122 (Erythrai), 124 (Kamarina), 127 (Elis), 128 (Sparta), 133 (Chios), 143 (Miletos), 158 (Andros) and 194 (Ioulis, on Keos).

As regards the “old” material, the matter of re-dating arises. Individual inscriptions can of course always migrate forwards or backwards in time, for individual reasons. One of several cases in point here is no. 136, an Athenian decree concerning cypress-wood from Karpathos. Once placed in the 390s (Tod no. 110), moved to the late 5<sup>th</sup> century as IG I<sup>3</sup> 1454, it is now dated “445–430” by Osborne and Rhodes. But the over-arching chronological issue of recent decades, as 5<sup>th</sup>-century aficionados well know, has been that of dating Attic inscriptions by some of their letter-forms, especially sigma. ML had stoutly upheld the orthodoxy that letters such as the three-stroke form of (capital) sigma were not used by masons in Athens after 446. Attempts to challenge and overthrow this doctrine were long confined, in practice, to a series of articles by H. B. Mattingly. I myself explained to successive cohorts of my students in the 1970s and 1980s why Mattingly’s crusade was a mistake. Happily, he lived long enough (1923–2015) to see himself vindicated – notably by the fact, hard-won but nowadays inescapable, that Athens’ treaties with Sicilian Eggesta and Halikyai (166) belong not in the 450s but in 418/7 (the archonship of Antiphon) and, probably, 416/5. The commentary *ad loc.* by Osborne and Rhodes expands upon their general presentation of the issue at pp. xxvii–viii; and more of the same features under (e.g.) 131 (Chalkis: “446/5 or 424/3”), 137 (Athene Nike: “438–435 or 450–445”), 154 (Kleinias’ decree about tribute: “425/4 or slightly later (?)”) and 155 (Standards Decree: “c. 425–415”). The whole edifice of Meiggs’ “crisis of the (4)40s,” expounded in 1972 in *The Athenian Empire*, is something that Peter Rhodes had already been deconstructing (along with its counterpart “Periclean Imperialism”) in several recent articles, and the treatment of its major building-blocks here seals its fate as an aberration from the past.

So: a general introduction to epigraphical evidence and its uses; a new, enlarged selection of appropriate documents; facing translations of them all (as already in RO); detailed commentaries, incorporating up-to-date bibliography; three maps; seventeen plates. How any of this could have been done significantly better is very hard to see. It is quite superb.

In 1969 a freshman like me could afford to buy ML. At \$195 (£125), OR will initially be beyond all but the deepest of undergraduate pockets. A paperback can be anticipated in due course. Meanwhile, all self-respecting academic libraries should stock as many copies as circumstances allow; and any individuals with sufficient money to spend will want to possess, and relish, their own.

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