

SALVATORE NICOSIA: *Il segno e la memoria. Iscrizioni funebri della Grecia antica*. Sellerio editore, Palermo 1992. 236 p., 8 illustrazioni a colore. ITL 15.000.

Questo bel volume si rivolge ad un pubblico colto non alienato dalle radici della civiltà europea – gruppo raro in molti paesi ma esistente ancora in Italia – e, di conseguenza, non propriamente agli addetti ai lavori nel campo dell'epigrafia. L'indirizzo divulgativo non esclude, però, l'alta qualità della prefazione e dei commenti nel testo (l'autore è ordinario di Letteratura greca nell'Università di Palermo). Sono stati selezionati 90 epigrammi funebri provenienti da varie località del mondo greco e cronologicamente ordinati tra il VII sec. a.C. e il IV d.C. Questi epitafi, dei quali si dà anche il testo originale a fronte, illustrano il concetto greco della tomba iscritta come garante della permanenza dell'individuo oltre la morte. Nel loro insieme forniscono una lettura affascinante sulla vita e sulla morte umana nei loro diversissimi aspetti.

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The Athenian Agora. Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Volume XXV: Ostraka by Mabel L. Lang. Princeton, N.J. 1990. xx, 188 p., 30 Figures, 11 Plates and a Plan. *Volume XIX: Inscriptions. Horoi* by Gerald V. Lalonde; *Poletai Records* by Merle K. Langdon; *Leases of Public Lands* by Michael B. Walbank. Princeton, N.J. 1991. xiv, 245 p., 16 Plates and a Plan.

It is a delight to see the Agora inscription *corpora* being published within The Athenian Agora series after a hiatus of 14 years. The texts on stones will be published as Volumes XV – XIX (*The Athenian Councillors* and *The Funerary Monuments* were edited as Volumes XV and XVII in 1974; *The Decrees* and *The Dedications and Imperial Letters* are nearing completion as Volumes XVI and XVIII by Geoffrey Woodhead and Daniel J. Geagan, respectively). Until now these *corpora* comprise the edition of more than 3,000 inventory numbers from the Agora inscriptions, less than half of the 8,000 or so items hitherto recorded. As it would seem to me, the missing volumes will be pretty lengthy, because Ephebic Decrees – the most important class of inscriptions that has not yet been published within the previous *corpora* – cannot cover very many of the remaining inventory numbers. It could, of course, be that most of the remaining items are too fragmentary to be classified for a *corpus*. Time will tell.

Mabel L. Lang, Agora scholar of long standing, has written a useful compilation of 1,145 ostraka found in the ancient Agora proper, building partly on earlier notes and drafts of Eugene Vanderpool and Antony E. Raubitschek. This Volume has been

published outside the ones reserved for the stone inscriptions, as was also Volume XXI (*Graffiti and Dipinti*, 1976, also by Mabel L. Lang). It must be admitted that the documentation of the phenomenon is impressive: only one sixth of the texts have previously been edited. The author briefly describes the plan of the work and starts with a short review of studies on ostracism in Athens (an exhaustive study is in progress under the leadership of Peter Siewert). She carries on with important aspects of definition and identification of her material. It is amazing to know that 9,000 ostraka in the Kerameikos are still unpublished! The analysis of the materials, (short) texts, format of writing, alphabet, sounds and spelling, and grammar are extremely useful and interesting. Another relevant issue, groups of ostraka, has been analyzed in a separate chapter. This has also taken into account within deposit summaries and a list of Agora ostraka by groups (see p. 163-64 and p. 179-88).

Candidates to be ostracized consist of more than 50 persons during the 480's B.C., mid-century, and 417-415 B.C. The texts themselves are admittedly short with the name of the candidate accompanied by his patronymic or demotic. There are very few exceptions to this: nos. 44, 56, 356, 589, 647, 1065, and 1081. Four of the candidates have an exceptional number of ostraka against them: Themistokles Neokleous Phrearrios, Kallixenos Aristonymou Xypetaion, Hippokrates Alkmeonidou Alopekethen, and Aristeides Lysimachou Alopekethen represent two thirds of the total of these ostraka.

There are only a few minor issues that could be criticized: the illustrations cover only one third of the texts (including the references to earlier editions) so that many of the readings cannot be checked. After having checked most of the drawings I would have used more dots in the readings. There are only six texts with a drawing **and** a photo, and only text 1065 seems to be at odds with the reading. This remark, however, does not mean that the readings must be radically revised. For a few examples, nos. 19, 110, 321, 336, 432, and 1065 seem to preserve more that has been edited. The other quibble is about the missing index of words: as already noted, it would contain not much more than the names, occasional patronymics or demotics of the candidates, readily available in the table of contents on p. ix-x.

Three groups of inscriptions of civic importance have been published by three young scholars in Agora XIX. None of the studies would have warranted a separate monograph due to being only 50 to 90 pages long; it is practical to have them in one volume with a full set of concordances and indices of words.

The first study concerns itself with *horoi*, 131 short texts, 15 of which are previously unpublished. All of the texts are illustrated either here or in earlier publications. On the whole, the readings seem to be accurate, but on the basis of the photos many more letters should be dotted. The study preceding the catalogue of inscriptions by Gerald V. Lalonde is excellent: nature and purpose, chronological range

(mainly 5th and 4th century B.C.), physical characteristics, location and orientation of the various documents are assessed. The subclasses are variable: *horoi* of sanctuaries, civil establishments, roads, and grave sites together with *trittys* markers and security *horoi*, an altogether different kind of document. The last type is most difficult to date, even approximately. As the author correctly remarks, most of the stones are displaced, not *in situ*, and were brought to the Agora at a later date.

Poletai inscriptions, studied by Merle K. Langton, were originally set up in the Agora. The study on the transactions of the Vendors is illuminating: sale or lease of public and confiscated property, the lease of mines and taxes, the letting of contracts for public works. Seven of the 64 long fragmentary texts are previously unpublished. Texts 14, 15, 21, 26*a*, 38, 42, and 44 remain totally unillustrated. Most of the documents belong to the 4th century B.C.

The last study deals with the leasing of public and sacred property on the basis of 24 mainly long and fragmentary inscriptions deriving from the Athenian Agora. Michael Walbank intends to continue his study by publishing a *corpus* of all Athenian documents relevant to this topic. A thorough study of the history of leases of public lands is documented with a catalogue of inscriptions, one third of which have not been previously edited. Texts 7*b* and 13*d* remain unillustrated anywhere. The great majority of these texts belong to the 4th century B.C. The types of property include state property, deme property, sacred and cult property, a theater (text 13, which is very interesting), and so forth. As to the readings, I have the same quibble again: as far as may be judged on the basis of the photos, more has been read than would seem to survive on the stones (see texts 5, 15; Appendix texts 3, 4, 6, and 7).

Another minor fault with the present volume is the occasional inaccuracy of the Greek accentuation and the Greek on the whole. There are very few mistakes in the edition of the inscriptions, but they are far more numerous in the index of words, especially in recording the nominative case. The more grave cases include Αἶαξ instead of Αἶας, οἴκησις instead of οἰκέω, and πρυτανεύς instead of πρύτανις. Perhaps the indexer was another person, not one of the authors. On the other hand, the number of mistakes is not as great as e.g. in SEG. But on the whole, all of this does not really diminish the consistently high value of the Agora volumes of inscriptions.

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