

CLAUDE VATIN: *Monuments votifs de Delphes*. Archaeologica Perusina 10; Archaeologica 100. Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, Roma 1991. Pp. 268 con 115 figg., 11 tavv. e 11 grafici. ISBN 88-7689-060-2. ITL 500.000.

C'est un volume hautement sujet à controverse que Claude Vatin vient de nous proposer. Selon l'auteur, un grand nombre d'inscriptions n'ont jamais été vues. Son travail épigraphique, qui s'appuie sur des techniques de lecture nouvelles, a la prétention de déterminer l'existence de palimpsestes épigraphiques. Toutefois, les nouvelles trouvailles de Vatin ont été fortement contestées par les meilleurs spécialistes de l'épigraphie grecque; voir, par ex., Bull. ép. 1992, 78, selon qui la plupart des nouvelles lectures soient inadmissibles. Les textes qu'édite Vatin ont été lus par lui sur des pierres où personne n'avait jamais rien lu. Malgré un examen attentif, on ne voit rien sur les fac-similés présentés par Vatin des excellentes photographies dont il accompagne son étude. Particulièrement inconsideré est le dernier chapitre "Les Etrusques à Delphes", où l'auteur évoque plusieurs inscriptions grecques et étrusques qu'il veut restituer en appliquant ses méthodes de lecture. Dans ces conditions, il est inutile de prolonger la discussion. Vatin, dont les mérites dans le domaine de l'épigraphie grecque sont bien connus, semble avoir commis un pas de clerc avec ce dernier livre.

*Heikki Solin*

WILLIAM HORBURY – DAVID NOY: *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt. With an index of the Jewish inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica*. Cambridge UP, Cambridge 1992. XXIV, 378 pp., XXXII plates. GBP 60.

As is well known, the Jewish inscriptions of Egypt were published by G. Kittel in the second volume of Frey's *Corpus inscriptionum Judaicarum*, and then (much better) by the late D. M. Lewis in the third volume of the *Corpus papyrorum Judaicarum*. Even if the number of the new inscriptions included by the authors, but not yet known to the previous editors, is not very high, this does not mean that the new edition would not be useful. On the contrary, it is most welcome. With its commentaries, its rich bibliographical apparatus, and with its indices, the book will be very useful not only for the epigraphers, but also, and above all, for the students of the Jewish diaspora in the Hellenistic-Roman world.

*Heikki Solin*

DAVID NOY: *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe. Vol. I: Italy (excluding the City of Rome), Spain and Gaul*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993. xxi, 385 p., XXXII plates. ISBN 0-521-44201-X. GBP 60.00.

This is the first volume of a highly welcome new epigraphical corpus of Jewish inscriptions from the Western part of the Roman Empire. The second volume will concentrate on the inscriptions found in Rome: a larger collection than any other place of provenance can provide and fraught with its own special problems. The scarcity of Jewish epigraphical material, considering the substantial Jewish population in Western

Europe, is somewhat unexpected. The present publication amounts to 192 texts which can be dated before A.D. 700. There are numerous corrections and additions to J. B. Frey's *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum* (not only to its first edition from 1936 but also to the revised edition by B. Lifshitz in 1975). In addition, there are lists of inscriptions included in *CIJ* that are now considered medieval or non-Jewish. Each text is followed by a translation, bibliography, information about the context of the discovery and rich comments. The latter give a sound and many-sided impression: they discuss, among other things, linguistic, terminological, onomastical, demographical and ideological matters, and they do not forget the iconographical part (mostly the occurrence of Jewish symbols). The translations are in this case especially important since they make the texts better available also to scholars not well-versed in ancient languages. In truth, they serve also the classical scholars since the inscriptions are often bilingual (Greek/Latin and Hebrew/Aramaic) or even trilingual (Greek, Latin and Hebrew), and, I imagine, the specialists in Jewish culture for similar reasons.

Jaakko Aronen

BENGT MATTSSON: *The Ascias Symbol on Latin Epitaphs*. Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology and Literature, Pocket-book 70. Paul Åströms förlag, Göteborg 1990. 154 p. ISBN 91-86098-83-7.

The publishing house of Professor Paul Åström is well-known for its publication of books on Classical, mainly Mediterranean, studies, that the authors perhaps otherwise would have had trouble finding a publisher for, due to the nature of the field, which means that each text has a potential readership that is quite small.

Here Åström has given us another potentially important work, this time by Bengt Mattsson, which considers the implications of the *ascia* symbol, in particular on epitaphs. This is a study based on material previously published. According to the author, his primary sources have been the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and *L'Année épigraphique*.

The main body (109 pages) of Mattsson's work consists of a catalogue listing the instances of mention of finds of tombstones (of all types) with either a pictorial representation of an *ascia*, or a mention of the instrument in a formula (e.g. *sub ascia dedicare*). The entries are grouped according to the general region and specific place of discovery (where such information is available) following the model of *CIL*. The provinces that have yielded the greatest number of *ascia* inscriptions are Provincia Lugdunensis (394 inscriptions), Gallia Narbonensis (216), Dalmatia (128), Latium (127) and Aquitania (98). The number of *ascia* inscriptions from the Gallic provinces thus totals over 700. As the number of *ascia* inscriptions found in Latium, while considerable, does not constitute a large proportion of the total number of grave inscriptions in that province, the conclusion seems clear that the principal area of *ascia* inscriptions are the Gallic provinces, even though the inscriptions that seem to be the oldest are to be found in Dalmatia.

The catalogue is followed by a brief discussion, divided into four chapters, in which the author discusses various theories on the significance of *ascia* on tombstones and distinguishes between two main hypotheses, which he calls the material theory and the spiritual theory, respectively. The former is supposed to refer to the existence of a specific rite, in which an *ascia* was present at the consecration of the grave, while