

inscriptions in question. Besides the main index, there are other indices, for instance of numerals, of the materials used and of the "tecniche di scrittura". Everything is of a very high quality, and the book should be seen as a model for other index volumes, and not just those to appear in this series.

But what is the use of a good book if only the richest libraries can afford to buy it? There is a tendency nowadays among some editors to ask ridiculously high prices for their books, perhaps in order to exclude, for some reason, the possibility that private customers should want to buy them. However, it is hard to see the use of this policy, and I must say that I personally very much prefer editors who ask reasonable prices. Now the editor of this series, Quasar, certainly belongs to the latter group, and thus deserves sincere thanks for producing not only good books, but also books people can buy. It is also most notable that the price of a *Supplementum Italicum* has been the same for years.

*Olli Salomies*

*Inscriptiones Sanctae Sedis 2: Le iscrizioni dei Cristiani in Vaticano. Materiali e contributi scientifici per una mostra epigrafica, a cura di Ivan Di Stefano Manzella. Città del Vaticano 1997. Distribuzione esclusiva: Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon Srl, Roma. 379 p. ITL 150.000.*

It was decided many years ago that the Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy of 1997 in Rome should include various collateral manifestations, one of which was to be an exhibition in the Vatican Museums dedicated to Christian epigraphy. This project was completed in September 1997 when the brilliantly organized "mostra epigrafica" was inaugurated.

This volume, the second one of the *Inscriptiones Sanctae Sedis*, is based on this exhibition and the huge epigraphic collections of the Vatican Museums in general. The material exhibited is widely commented on in Section 3 where the pieces are classified within fourteen thematic groups (e.g. the first testimonies of Christianity; monuments and toponyms in Rome; writing material, re-use, instrumentum, palaeography; social classes and office-holders; ecclesiastical hierarchy; God, Saints, martyrs and benefactors; decorative elements; style, diction, formulae; the army; crafts and professions; ethnic and religious elements in Rome; linguistic aspects in late Antique inscriptions; onomastics). Even though it is impossible to provide a complete view of the world of Christian epigraphy under such headings, the material discussed is nonetheless well chosen to illustrate what inscriptions can tell about the transformation of Christian society and its relation to the pagan world. The discussion of the epigraphic culture of late Antiquity not only follows the great lines but also focuses on many fascinating details. Some variation of quality can be observed between individual contributions, but the comments are usually written with a professional hand. Every section is preceded by a brief and useful introduction by Ivan Di Stefano Manzella.

The first section of the book discusses the formation and contents of the various epigraphic collections preserved in the Vatican Museums (9–96). Not only the stones themselves, but also archives, manuscripts, inventories and other museological issues are dealt with. Every contribution is important and interesting to read, but for practical purposes (research in the archives, etc.) the most useful are those by G. Spinola (*Nascita e*

sviluppo della sezione epigrafica cristiana dei Musei Vaticani), M.A. De Angelis (L'Archivio Storico dei Musei Vaticani: fonti sull'organizzazione amministrativa nell'Ottocento e documenti per le collezioni epigrafiche cristiane), M. Buonocore (Iter epigraphicum Vaticanum: una guida ai principali testimoni della tradizione manoscritta dell'epigrafia cristiana nei codici della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), and C. Lega (Indice delle iscrizioni cristiane del Lapidario ex Lateranense).

The second main section concentrates on history, religion and habits in the light of the inscriptions produced by Christian communities. This may be regarded as the central part of the volume, considering that the majority of the contributions, mostly written by specialists, make a general survey of important issues relating to late Antiquity (I. Kajanto: Roman Nomenclature; P. Colafrancesco: the Latin epigraphic language; V. Flocchi Nicolai: Christian funerary monuments and places of cult from the third to the sixth century (to be consulted together with the topographic map enclosed in the inner back cover of the volume); C. Carletti: the emergence and development of the Christian epigraphic formulary; D. Mazzoleni: the origin and chronology of monograms; F. Bisconti: decorative figures in the Christian inscriptions of Rome; M.L. Costantini: *servus* and *libertus* in the urban epigraphic documentation from the late Antiquity; M.L. Caldelli, *D M* and *D M S* in the Christian inscriptions of Rome; C. Ricci: the presence of Italians and foreigners in Rome between the fourth and sixth century; G. Sacco: the famous blasphemous graffito from the Paedagogium in the Palatine).

Though all that has been printed in this volume will probably not be unanimously accepted by everyone, the result is nonetheless admirable. This is good reading for any epigraphist, and it is also highly recommendable to anyone interested in the world of the early Christians. The printing quality as well as that of the photographs is very good. For the fine result we should be grateful above all to Ivan Di Stefano Manzella, editor of the excellent Galleria Lapidaria volume (ISS 1), who not only undertook the tremendous editorial task but also in various ways has left his personal touch on the whole volume.

*Mika Kajava*

ALFRED SCHÄFER: *Unterhaltung beim griechischen Symposion: Darbietungen, Spiele und Wettkämpfe von homerischer bis in spätklassische Zeit*. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1997. ISBN 3-8053-2336-0. 128 S., 56 Taf. DEM 110.

Alfred Schäfer has taken up an interesting and important subject: entertainment at Greek symposia. It is a generally accepted notion that symposia were central to the ancient Greek societies, at least to some of them. Thus, we find a great number of studies of themes around Greek symposia. What has been lacking, though, is a systematic study of the things which kept the symposiasts happy when taking part in a symposium, things we would call 'entertainment'. This monograph fills in a part of that gap, and provides us a good list and a thorough enough analysis of pictorial source material useful for the studies of Greek symposia.

The study consists of seven chronologically defined chapters: the Homeric period, 7th-6th centuries BC, 580/70-530 BC, 530/20-480/70 BC, 480/70-450 BC, 450-410/400 BC, 5th-4th centuries BC. These chapters are followed by some general conclusions after which comes a catalogue of the images used in the book. The solution of dividing the study