

*Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram*. Edited by PETER BING and JON STEFFEN BRUSS. Brill, Leiden 2007. ISBN 978-90-04-15218-2. XXI, 657 pp. EUR 199.

*P. Mil. Vogl.* VIII 309, the magnificent collection of over 100 Hellenistic epigrams (generally attributed to Posidippus of Pella), published by G. Bastiniani and C. Gallazi (in collaboration with C. Austin) in 2001, is no doubt the most important papyrus find in the last decades. Although interest in the Greek epigram was already increasing before the publication of the Milan papyrus, research on the subject practically exploded after it and it is worth noting that the majority of the articles in this book somehow refer to this new material. The reason for the interest in the Greek epigram also has something to do with the fact that research on epigrams both triggers and requires research in several other fields of classical studies. The epigram has its roots in epigraphy; it is transmitted to us both as embedded in literature and in papyri, as well as in manuscripts, the *Codex Palatinus* having its own interesting history. Epigrams can be studied in an epigraphical, papyrological, codicological, philological, archaeological and religious context. A list of the literary environments in which an epigram can be placed is, in practice, endless. When we add to this that the epigram is also the only form of literature to which we might assume an "ordinary" man or woman in antiquity also contributed, it is no wonder that it fascinates modern scholars. There are also exceptionally good electronic resources on epigrams, which can be used by researchers and students, e.g., the web site maintained by the University of Leiden (<http://athena.leidenuniv.nl/letteren/opleiding/klassieketalen/index.php3?m=184&c=86>), which makes it easy and convenient to follow the flow of the study. However, this certainly does not render the present volume on Hellenistic Epigram by any means superfluous; on the contrary, this is a most welcome publication which will be of great use to scholars and which will contribute to the understanding of the whole genre of the epigram.

The present volume is a collection of papers written mostly by experienced scholars, and this results in a sophistication characteristic of the whole book. All the different aspects of the genre are well taken into account. The inscriptional epigrams and the literary models of the Hellenistic epigram are discussed in the first part of the book. A. Bettenworth has written an excellent contribution on the complicated issue of the interaction between inscriptions and literary epigrams. Describing this interference, she uses a metaphor of the two faces of the moon which I found both illuminating and intelligent. E. Bowie's topic is the meaning of symposium culture to early Hellenistic writers and to the circulation of their poems. D. Sider discusses the influence of the lost collection(s) of epigrams by Simonides on Hellenistic epigram collections, thus touching upon problems concerning Meleager and his sources. N. Krevans writes about the arrangement of Hellenistic epigram collections, the main focus of her article being on the Milan papyrus. Meleager and Philip, the earliest sources of the *Greek Anthology*, are the topic of the contribution of L. Argentieri, in which the author illustrates the lost but reconstructed Στέφανοι. E. Magnelli discusses the metric aspects of the Hellenistic epigram. He offers two tables illustrating the relationship of metrical rules and the degree to which they were obeyed by the poets, these tables being a useful tool in this otherwise very literary book.

The second and third parts of the book concentrate on epigrams as literature and they introduce the genres of epigram as well as various methods of research. Of these articles, which are all outstanding, I would like to mention especially G. Zanker's article "Characterization in Hellenistic epigram", in which the author points out how the writers of the epigrams were also keen to describe different types of personalities, in the same manner as New Comedy

and, e.g., the Mimiambi. This has become evident most recently with the title *τρόποι* in the Milan papyrus, preceding a set of epitaphs, which, however, are grouped together to illustrate something more than just funerary epigrams.

Part four focuses on the intertextual aspects of epigrams, the stress being on epic and archaic poetry but it also includes useful contributions on the question of how theatre and philosophy are reflected in Hellenistic epigrams. As one would expect, the book ends with the subject of the "reception" of the epigram, both in Roman time, and in more recent literature. I found the highlight of the volume in this section: G. Nisbet's article "Roman Imperial Receptions of Hellenistic Epigram" convinces the reader that there are still fresh and new angles to be found in the study of ancient literature. N. shakes and dusts off our concepts of the epigram and the stereotypes that have been maintained, e.g., in the studies of epigrams "by emperors" compared to those "about emperors". His colourful and fresh language is something one seldom reads in scholarly works and even the Hellenistic poets would probably have been pleased with it.

This book is most useful for those who want to get a general view of the *status quaestionis* of this literary genre, which is in constant motion. It has also a lot to give to a more advanced reader, e.g., because of the excellent indexes and, of course, because of the expertise of the contributors. The one (compulsory) complaint I have is the total absence of illustrations; one or two photographs of epigrams, either on a stone or in a papyrus, would not have harmed the book; not even the (admittedly beautiful) cover has a picture illustrating the topic in some way.

Tiina Purola

*Dionisio di Alessandria: Descrizione della Terra abitata.* Prefazione, introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati di EUGENIO AMATO, con un saggio di FILOMENA COCCARO ANDREOU. Testi a fronte 93. Bompiani, Milano 2005. ISBN 88-452-3372-3. 374 pp. EUR 12.

La *Περιήγησις τῆς οἰκουμένης*, un poemetto di 1185 esametri (cfr. p. 51 nt. 1), di Dionisio d'Alessandria, vissuto all'epoca adrianea, può essere letta e valutata sotto diversi profili: oltre ad essere un manuale di geografia, nonché un'opera didattica, la *Periegesi* potrebbe considerarsi anche come un inno al mondo (composto del resto in occasione del soggiorno di Adriano in Egitto) oppure come la descrizione verbale di una carta geografica (*pinax*). Un'opera multidimensionale, insomma, che rimane indubbiamente una notevole testimonianza della cultura greca della Seconda Sofistica.

Il presente volume non costituisce una nuova edizione critica, ma offre un testo attendibile (quasi identico a quello di Isabelle Tsavari, Ioannina 1990) corredato da una traduzione moderna e scorrevole. Tuttavia il vero valore del libro resta nei capitoli introduttivi, ampi e pieni di dottrina, che servono a contestualizzare il poema di Dionisio all'interno della cultura e della letteratura greca. Particolarmente interessante il saggio sulla lettura della *Periegesi* (di Coccaro Andreou, pp. 11–50), in cui vengono analizzati lo statuto della disciplina geografica presso gli antichi, il contesto e i contenuti dell'opera dionisiana, il rapporto fra *lekphrasis* e il *pinax* cartografico ad esso sotteso (la *Periegesi* è ispirata al modello di Eratostene) nonché i caratteri epico-didascalici del poema. L'ampia introduzione (di Amato, pp. 51–181) getta luce