

Alison E. Cooley, *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, XXII + 531 pp., ISBN 978-0-521-84026-2, £ 69.99 (hb.) / ISBN 978-0-521-54954-7, £ 27.99 (pb.).

The rich literature on Latin epigraphy has recently been supplemented by a new publication – Alison E. COOLEY’s (= C.) *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy*. This book is not a textbook *sensu stricto* comparable to, say, R. CAGNAT’s *Cours d’épigraphie latine* or J.E. SANDYS’ *Latin Epigraphy*, but rather serves as a supplement to these and can be recommended as additional literature for those who study Latin epigraphy.

Designed to introduce the reader to the world of Latin inscriptions, the first chapter is focused on inscriptions localized near the Bay of Naples, which are extremely diverse in terms of type and content. The epigraphic culture of this region is analyzed not only with a view to the nature of the inscriptions and their location (the base of monuments, cippi, milestones, columns, tombstones, *instrumenta domestica*, etc.), but also to the role and place of inscriptions in the social structure of society. The second chapter then widens the geographical area.

A characteristic feature of the work under review is the meticulous analysis and description of the inscriptions. This includes a description of the object on which they are located, the Latin text with an English translation, broader historical and, if necessary, linguistic comment, and a relevant bibliography, which undoubtedly contributes to a better understanding of the sources and distinguishes the work under review from its competitors, e.g., J.-M. LASSÈRRE, *Manuel d’épigraphie romaine* (Paris 2005). The author continues her chosen method of presentation in the second chapter, considering the epigraphic culture of the Roman world.

In the first chapter, much attention is devoted to inscriptions on *instrumenta domestica* (bricks, tiles, amphoras, water-pipes, etc.) that are associated with economic activities (section 1.4) as well as to inscriptions on works of art and graffiti (section 1.5).

The second chapter, “Epigraphic culture in the Roman world” is an extended version of the first one, describing in detail the wider range of inscriptions (epitaphs, graffiti, juridical, honorific, religious, building and rock-cut inscriptions, inscriptions on milestones and on *instrumenta domestica* as well as inscriptions within the artistic media) from different regions of the Roman state. By differentiating inscriptions according to their features, materials and method of application and the type of monument, the author rightly notes the lack of clear boundaries between various types of inscriptions. This reflects her own understanding of epigraphy as a discipline that studies inscriptions in the broadest sense: “Epigraphy [...] is really a subdiscipline created by convenience and compromise. In order to understand epigraphic culture, it is essential to recognize the permeability of the boundaries between writing that has been preserved on all kinds of media” (p. 126).

Section 2.3.2, “The emergence of Christian epigraphy?”, is extremely informative with a detailed analysis of the themes, symbols and formulas of Christian epigraphic monuments and how they differ from the pagan ones, allowing the author to answer the question about the existence of “Christian epigraphy” in the affirmative.

The connection between epigraphic culture and geographical conditions is described in section 2.4, where (with the example of Tripolitania) the distribution of inscriptions according to the nature of the terrain is considered. Urban epigraphy is singled out, epigraphy in the pre-desert interior and epigraphy of the military camp in Bu Njem (Gholaia in Lybia). In this case, the main emphasis is placed on the connection between Roman epigraphic practices and the local element, particularly in bilingual inscriptions, combined national and local religious cults and so on.

The “biography” of inscriptions from their inception to their extinction is presented in the final paragraph “The life-cycle of inscriptions”, where the author considers not only the process of the emergence of inscriptions, but also their relationship with the ethnic composition of the population

and literacy, as well as the afterlife of inscriptions, including additions, changes, removal of the text and reuse of the material on which they were made.

The third and final chapter of the manual, “A technical guide to Latin epigraphy”, seems to be the most useful for those involved in Latin epigraphy. It characterizes the main collections of Latin inscriptions, such as *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*, *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*, *Inscriptiones Latinae liberae rei publicae*, and corpora of Christian inscriptions. Naturally, the main focus is on *CIL* as the main database: a detailed description of its structure, the construction of entries, editorial designations, abbreviations, the method of working with the *Corpus* and so on. The information on electronic databases of inscriptions is also very important (*Archivum Corporis Electronicum*, *Electronic Archive of Greek and Latin Epigraphy*, *Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss / Slaby*), as well as the current state of epigraphic research.

The concluding chapter contains practical advice on working with inscriptions, including their review, description, dating and the restoration of entire inscriptions on the basis of the respective fragments.

The book contains two appendices that include consular *fasti* (298 BC–541 AD) and the imperial titles from Augustus to Justinian, an *index locorum* and a general index. The extensive bibliography is also noteworthy. However, the main works related to individual sections would perhaps have merited a separate list.

It is also worth noting the abundance of factual material used by the author (about 200 inscriptions of various kinds, from the 1st c. BC to the 5th c. AD, often accompanied by illustrations of which we have counted more than one hundred).

We believe that this work would have benefited from the inclusion of information about the evolution of Latin letters, abbreviations and ligatures that are found in the inscriptions, which is common practice in textbooks on epigraphy (e.g. M.G. SCHMIDT, *Einführung in die lateinische Epigraphik*, Darmstadt 2011, pp. 122–129), as well as from the inclusion of inscriptions of the early Republic. However, judging from the content of the book, the author’s aim was not the creation of a textbook of Latin epigraphy but rather the analysis of the epigraphic culture of the Roman world as a whole: a challenge that C. has coped with quite successfully.

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