

Explication of geographical environments includes plants of Arabia, the Near East, and Egypt. In this connection, we may add two excellent works concerned with perfume plants, Paul Faure's *Parfums et aromates de l'Antiquité* (Paris, 1987) and A. Avanzini (ed), *Profumi d'Arabia. Atti del Convegno* (Rome, 1997). For the Mediterranean environment—that is, the ecological context of plants, ancient and modern—we have the richly documented and often iconoclastic book by A. T. Grove and Oliver Rackham, *The Nature of Mediterranean Europe. An Ecological History* (New Haven and London, 2001).

In one paper, ancient botany extends to the Bronze Age, with A.'s critical examination of N. Marinatos's work on crocuses represented on the wall paintings of Akrotiri, Thera. For further work on these and other plants represented at Thera and in Minoan Crete, see papers by R. Porter, A. Sarpaki, and P. Warren, in S. Sherratt (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Symposium. The Wall Paintings of Thera. 30 August—4 September 1997 I–II* (Athens, 2000).

A major part of the history of botanical identification and taxonomy is study of the period between the ancient writers and Linnaeus, that is, the work published in medieval herbals and by Renaissance botanists. Chief among the latter was Charles de L'Écluse (Clusius), though he was just one of several eminent students of Rondelet at Montpellier, with the tradition of which A. herself is so clearly associated. One paper addresses this subject, 'Ambiguités et vicissitudes des noms de plantes de Théophraste à Linné', with the interesting outcome that the stability of names is the exception rather than the rule. Some names have survived from antiquity to the present day, e.g. *μύρτος*—here, I would stress the wealth of material in the Greek oral and popular tradition—but changes were numerous and their study is labyrinthine, even before Linnaeus used so many earlier and contemporary botanists' names for genera. Meanwhile, one cannot praise too highly A.'s contributions to knowledge in this field, so difficult in the study, so enjoyable *en plein air*.

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H. W. PLEKET, R. S. STROUD, A. CHANIOTIS, J. H. M. STRUBBE (edd.): *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Volume XLVIII 1998. Pp. xxvi + 874. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2001. Cased, €145. ISBN: 90-5063-278-5.

The 1998 edition of the invaluable digest of the year's publications of Greek inscriptions contains a plethora of highly interesting texts. The funerary offer the greatest number, dating from the sixth century B.C. (e.g. nos 1065–84, Thera) to the Byzantine empire over a millennium later (e.g. no. 776, Beroia). Those that shed light on social life and religious belief include an epitaph from Perinthos (no. 934, first/second century A.D.) for a member of the 'Sparganiotai', a Dionysiac association, which exhibits slogans relative to the dissolution of the self with the body on death, and critical of the tag, 'Greetings, O passers-by!', commonly inscribed on pagan tombs. Most people, apparently, thought that the deceased retained a self-conscious personality, as for instance in an epitaph from Thessalonika (853, late second century A.D.): 'Epigonos for Kleopatra, his sweetest, and Paramona the child for her mother, in memory;—I, Kleopatra, conjure you by Cabeiros to read this and dance'. Nevertheless, Dionysiac/Orphic belief accepted that the soul was immortal,

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and devised initiatory and funerary rites around this (2187, study by C. Riedweg, 1236 bis, Entella, third century B.C., and 1227, Crete, first century A.D.).

Only a minority of tombs were distinguished by metrical inscriptions, which marked their owners as educated, and possessors of élite culture. A verse epitaph for Symmachos (1362, first century A.D.? Ephesos), who died at twenty-one, refers to his fellow-Ephebes, and the skill and knowledge he left behind, a reference to the curriculum of athletics and education at the gymnasium, where his age is interestingly high. Some metrical epitaphs reveal that the level of skill achieved was often not perfect: nos 974 and 980 (Kallatis and Tomis, Moesia, third/fourth century A.D.) are based on the same model, presumably literary, but that at Kallatis is less accomplished. Such feats were well beyond the resources of the majority.

Polytheism is well represented in all its rich variety, ranging from an archaic altar of Zeus Elastoros from Paros (1136, 525–500 B.C.), and dedications of kouroi to Apollo, and a Kore to Artemis from Klaros (1406–8, mid-sixth century B.C.), to lead curse-tablets from Athens (354–6, c. 375 B.C.), one of them naming Smindyrides, accused of profaning the Eleusinian Mysteries in 415 B.C., to manumission records from the sanctuary of Asklepios at Buthrotos (683–9, second century B.C.), to decrees regulating behaviour in the sanctuary of Apollo on Delos (1037, 180–166 B.C.), the conduct of wrestling at religious festivals at Olympia (541, 525–511 B.C.), and the law on manumission at Gortyn (1208, 150 B.C.), to a bronze shield trophy of a war between Hipponion and Kroton, dedicated at Olympia (546, c. 480 B.C.), and a bronze plaque listing Olympic victors (553, fourth century A.D.), created at almost the end of the pagan tradition.

Christianity is represented here by numerous mosaic inscriptions, notably including an acrostic Phos/Zoe (light, life), emblematic of two key concepts of the faith, from a sixth century A.D. church entrance in Sidon (1870), and by a lead seal from the ‘Rufinion in Pergamon’, a former temple of Zeus erected in the second century A.D. by the Pergamene consul L. Crispinus Pactumeius Rufinus, now belonging to the Church of the Theotokos, and under the management of ‘Isidoros, her servant’ (2092, sixth century A.D.).

Political life is illustrated by many legal texts, such as the land allotment decree from Delphi (592, second century A.D.), royal (783), imperial (1582), and gubernatorial (742, cf. 1514) correspondence with cities and individuals, and honorific monuments, for example, the statue-bases of Philip II of Macedon from Megalopolis (521, c. 337 B.C.), and of the Roman imperatores, L. Licinius Murena and L. Cornelius Sulla, with the evergetes Cn. Manlius Agrippa, from the agora at Messene (494–496, c. 80 B.C.). It seems that all literate classical life is here.

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ROMAN ARCHITECTURE

R. TAYLOR: *Roman Builders. A Study in Architectural Process*. Pp. xvi + 303, ills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Paper, £18.95/US\$25 (Cased, £50/US\$75). ISBN: 0-521-00583-3 (0-521-80334-9 hbk).

Everything you always wanted to know about Roman buildings but were afraid to ask. This might have been a more appropriate title (or subtitle) for T.'s book, which

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