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**W. Stenhouse, *Reading Inscriptions and Writing Ancient History: Historical Scholarship in the Late Renaissance* (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supp. 86). London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2005. Pp. x + 204, 24 pls. isbn 0-900587-98-9. £50.00.**

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PHIL PERKINS

- W. STENHOUSE, *READING INSCRIPTIONS AND WRITING ANCIENT HISTORY: HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP IN THE LATE RENAISSANCE* (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supp. 86). London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2005. Pp. x + 204, 24 pls. ISBN 0-900587-98-9. £50.00.

Will Stenhouse has already established himself as an expert on the epigraphic scholarship of the early modern period, having edited the *Ancient Inscriptions* volume in the publication of the *Museo cartaceo* ('Paper Museum') of the seventeenth-century collector Cassiano dal Pozzo (reviewed in the last issue of this journal). In order to set his then subject in context, S. prefaced that volume with an introduction to the history of epigraphic scholarship in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Rome and in an appendix provided brief biographies of the scholars mentioned. The monograph now under review intersects with this previous work in a number of respects (e.g. the work of Pirro Ligorio looms large in both) but is far more than simply an expansion of the earlier prefatory essay. Although S.'s discussion ranges from the activities of Poggio Bracciolini and Cyriacus of Ancona in the first half of the fifteenth century to those of Joseph Scaliger, Marcus Welser, and Jan Gruter in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, those seeking a straightforward narrative of the history of epigraphic scholarship of the period will be disappointed. But that is not S.'s purpose here. Rather, the central focus of this book is an examination the epigraphic interests of a small group of scholars working, primarily in Rome, in the mid-sixteenth century.

It is S.'s contention that this group, which came together in Rome between 1545 and 1555 and whose interests encompassed Classical and Christian antiquity, the study of the manuscript tradition, and numismatics as well as inscriptions, developed the ways of thinking about inscriptions and their interpretation that were to shape the future of the emerging discipline of epigraphy. The network of acquaintances and correspondents was international in background, including the Spaniard Antonio Agustín, the Frenchman Jean Matal, and the Fleming Martin Smet, as well as the Italians Ottavio Bagatto (Pantagato) and Onofrio Panvinio. Many of these were ordained but, more importantly, most shared a common experience of the study of the law (that is the revived Roman law of the later Middle Ages). This inevitably involved encountering references to the institutions of ancient Rome and, as S. points out (13), these men generally shared an interest in charting or 'mapping', as he puts it, 'the nooks and crannies of the Roman state'. On the fringe of this learned circle operated the artist Ligorio, whose output provided some of the raw material for its discussions and whose work they held generally in high esteem (81), despite doubts raised over the authenticity of individual texts or by his lack of classical education. In order to situate the work of this group in the history of scholarship, S. discusses their humanist predecessors in the period before the sack of Rome in 1527, which was both physically damaging to collections of antiquities and disruptive to intellectual life in the papal capital. As S. explains, the study of the ancient inscriptions of Rome had reached an early watershed with the publication of Giacomo Mazochi's *Epigrammata antiquae urbis* (1521). The perceived deficiencies in the way that work represented epigraphic texts on the printed page provided an important stimulus to the developments of the scholarly generation of the 1540s onwards but, Panvinio aside, the fruits of their work and insights did not, on the whole, reach a wider reading public in their own lifetimes. Smet

did finalize a corpus of inscriptions in manuscript but it only received a printed edition posthumously thanks to Justus Lipsius, while the epigraphic studies of the others remained largely confined to their manuscript notebooks and letters. These did not go unnoticed, however, and were exploited for the major international effort that was the two-volume corpus *Inscriptiones antiqueae totius orbis Romani* (1601–1602), assembled by Gruter and others. This became a standard reference work and its format influential (it can quite reasonably be considered a direct ancestor of the still on-going *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*). As a result, the principles of classification, presentation, and textual criticism that were established by Agustín and friends in the preceding generation became influential on the subsequent development of the discipline. However, their interests in the physical aspects of epigraphic texts were not generally reflected in Gruter's corpus, which reinforced the attitude that privileged the text content of the inscriptions over their physical context.

S.'s major achievement is the intellectual archaeology in which he has engaged amongst the correspondence, manuscript notebooks, and *marginalia* produced by the generation between Mazochi and Gruter. The central chapters of the book explore the main concerns that emerge ('Collecting, Comparing, and Representing Inscriptions'; 'Transmission and Forgery'; 'The Reliability of Ancient Texts'; 'Inscriptions as Evidence'). S.'s discussion is made accessible by the provision of English translations of all the Neo-Latin and renaissance Italian source material quoted (note that on p. 67 'anyone' has dropped out of the translation of Ligorio's Italian in n. 64). Illustration, including five colour plates, is also used to good effect to bring the material alive. Indeed the magazine-like glossiness of the paper currently used for the *BICS Supplements* is well-suited to this purpose, though I worry about its long-term durability. S. demonstrates a sure handling of the source materials and this reviewer is thoroughly convinced by the general thrust of his arguments. However, on a couple of occasions the ability to check translation against original does offer opportunity for slight correction or suggestion of alternative interpretation. In a passage from a letter from Pantagato to Panvinio, discussing an inscription from Feltre (*CIL V.2071*), which Panvinio had derived from Ligorio, Pantagato suggests that the reading MENEN for the tribe of the honorand, rather than the MEN found elsewhere, was not good evidence for Menenia as the correct resolution (Mentina was then currently favoured) because this was just a 'municipal stone' ('un marmo municipale'). S. rightly cites this as an example of the increased nuancing of attitudes towards the relative authority of epigraphic texts. Had this been a more urban or imperial product, then greater weight might be accorded it. Panvinio reinforces the point by saying that the carving of MENEN might derive specifically from the error of 'un indotto municipie', i.e. an uneducated local (not an 'unlearned town', as S. pp. 10 and 99). In quoting comments of Bartolomeo Marliani on the status of the consular list in the Capitoline Fasti, as opposed to Livy, I am not sure that S.'s translation quite reflects Marliani's arguments. S. argues that Marliani used the term *libri* of the inscribed *fasti*, so dissolving the difference between the genres of inscription and narrative source (111–12 and n. 37). In fact, I think, Marliani is arguing that the author of the *fasti* would have been able to draw on a whole range of official resources, unlike Livy, a *vir privatus* (a qualification not translated by S.), especially because in those days books generally (not the *fasti*) were transcribed at great expense and effort. But these are very minor criticisms.

As in the dal Pozzo volume, S. provides handy biographies of the main protagonists, with suggestions for further reading. He clearly had the expectations of both ancient historians and renaissance scholars in mind in providing an annotated index to the manuscripts and early printed books discussed, as well as an index to the ancient sources discussed. The consolidated bibliography is less successful and might have worked better, if the editions of ancient texts and renaissance scholars had been separated from the modern scholarship. But again this is a minor quibble that does not detract from the fact that S. has produced a most valuable contribution to the study of the reception of antiquity in late Renaissance Europe.