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le dire autrement, l'*agency* attribuée aux couleurs (E. Swift évoque p. 193 un « active power », mais sans développer).

En somme, le volume confirme l'intérêt d'une histoire culturelle des couleurs dans l'Antiquité croisant textes, images et objets. C'est un instrument de travail utile car il comporte, outre un index général, une riche bibliographie finale et recèle de nombreuses références aux sources exploitables – y compris celles auxquelles on ne penserait pas de prime abord, comme les pions d'un jeu ou des étiquettes en plomb. Il fournit un solide outillage méthodologique et un bon échantillon d'approches possibles, susceptibles d'ouvrir la voie à des analyses plus contextualisées. On signalera à cet égard que des cartes auraient aidé à visualiser ce que l'on sait des zones de production et des flux de circulation des principaux pigments et colorants. La dimension géographique est en effet cruciale : plusieurs chapitres mettent en évidence ce que l'extension de l'empire romain a rendu possible en termes d'approvisionnement en marbres de diverses couleurs ; il faut imaginer que, déjà, les conquêtes d'Alexandre ont pu offrir aux Grecs l'accès à de nouveaux matériaux et renouveler les usages et les goûts en matière chromatique – ce que la peinture funéraire macédonienne nous laisse entrevoir. De fait, et c'est aussi un apport non négligeable, le livre démontre que la couleur est un excellent laboratoire pour observer les phénomènes de circulation entre traditions culturelles différentes, les stratégies de réappropriations ou d'hybridations : ainsi les Romains intégrant des termes grecs de couleur dans leur vocabulaire, reprenant en partie les canons architecturaux helléniques et copiant les bronzes grecs, tout en les transposant sur du marbre soigneusement revêtu de couleurs par des peintres.

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Erica Angliker and Ilaria Bultrighini (eds.), *New Approaches to the Materiality of Text in the Ancient Mediterranean. From Monuments and Buildings to Small Portable Objects*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2023. 262 pp. ISBN 978-2-503-60156-4.

The volume edited by Erika Angliker and Ilaria Bultrighini is part of a relatively recent but well-established trend in the study of ancient inscribed texts, in which the material aspects of writing are given full consideration along with the linguistic content and verbal meaning of the texts themselves. As the material aspects may range from the physical media on which texts were inscribed and the manner in which writing itself was made and displayed, to their original location and interactions with viewers and surrounding space, to the cultural and social context in which they were produced, this approach has the potential to offer a wide set of case studies and perspectives to advance our understanding of inscribed objects and the perceptions that users and recipients had of them. In this regard, the present volume is noteworthy for choosing to discuss a large variety of text-bearing artifacts in addition to stone inscriptions, such as tablets, vases and ostraca, rolls and codices, coins, amulets, textiles, mosaics, over a wide chronological and spatial span—the broader Mediterranean region from the Late Bronze Age to Late Antiquity—and, in particular, for bringing to the forefront the study of small portable objects, which had not been given full attention until now.

All contributions—thirteen chapters organized into five sections, plus an introduction and an afterword—focus on how the material aspects of artifacts worked together with the textual content they bore to convey the intended message and how texts and objects complemented each other in shaping their interaction with viewers. As is often the case in collections of works with multiple authors, the chosen theme is declined in each chapter with a different style and approach, yet without

detracting from the overall coherence of the volume. Since I cannot discuss all chapters in detail, in what follows I will try to highlight those contributions that deal with lesser-studied artifacts or offer original and fresh insights into more traditional ones.

In Section I ‘Texts on Portable Objects—Tablets, Vases, Ostraca’, Philippa M. Steele and Philip J. Boyes’ chapter (‘A Comparative Approach to Methods of Inscribing Clay Tablets. Interactions and Innovation in Cyprus and Ugarit’) considers the methods of writing, including writing tools, of Late Bronze Age Cypro-Minoan inscriptions on clay tablets from Enkomi and Ugarit. This analysis allows the authors to argue for undeniable interactions between Cypriot practices and those employed in the Near Eastern cuneiform writing tradition, in particular at Ugarit, where typical cuneiform writing methods were adapted and reinvented with a high degree of experimentation. It is evident that local writers, in producing these artifacts, engaged with both the specific requirements of the script and their socio-cultural context. Julia Lougovaya (‘A Lesson in a Desert Quarry. A Material Approach to a School Ostrakon’), focuses on the material and textual features of a school ostrakon – from how the sherd was prepared and with what tools to the layout of the inscription and its peculiar content—as well as of the context provided by other findings in second-century CE Mons Claudianus. Based on these elements, J.L. reconstructs the circumstances under which the artifact was created and the possible identity of its author, namely a quarry worker who completed this school assignment while receiving elementary education as an adult student. In both cases, in addition to strictly material features, it is the socio-cultural context in which the artifacts were produced that proves crucial to their understanding.

In Section II ‘Texts on Portable Objects—Coins, Rolls, Codices, and the Authoritativeness of the Texts’, Dario Calomino’s chapter (‘*Inspecto nummo...* The Materiality of Coin Imagery and inscriptions in the Roman World’), is particularly notable in taking into account the habit of writing on coins and that of defacing them in the Roman world as a way to show how users engaged with text and imagery on them. This allows the author to argue that coins were designed, among other things, as communicative visual media, whose material and textual features both influenced the reception of the official message the artifacts conveyed to their intended users.

Section III ‘Texts on Monuments and Buildings—Space and Context of Ancient Inscriptions’, is the most “traditional” of the volume, as it deals with the most common type of epigraphic artifacts, namely stone inscriptions. In it, Naomi Carless Unwin’s chapter (‘Epigraphy and the Power of Precedence in Asia Minor’) deals with the two practices of reuse and retrospective engraving of older texts in the civic landscape of Hellenistic and Roman cities in Asia Minor. The case studies presented by N.C.U. reveal that the content and material presence of older texts in the civic landscape combined to provide tangible evidence of past events whose resonance was deemed valuable to contemporary concerns, regardless of whether they could actually be read by all passersby.

On the other hand, Section IV, ‘Texts that Move through Media—Body and Text’, is probably the most original of the volume in considering various ways in which the human body was part of the material relation between text-bearing artifacts and their users or recipients. Jessica Lamont (‘Inscribed Materialities: Greek Curse Tablets’), shows how bodily contact with the material used for Greek curse tablets, i.e., lead, activated the exploitation of its physical properties—such as coldness, heaviness, lifelessness—to impart additional meaning on the inscribed text and reinforce the effects of the spell on the intended victims, to the point that in some cases the un-inscribed medium alone was thought to perform the same function as the written curse. In Sean V. Leatherbury’s chapter (‘Formulating Faith on Objects and Buildings. The “Light, Life” Formula in Late Antiquity’), the Christian formula “light, life” arranged in the cross-format provides us with an

example of a text that moved through different media, from gold cross pendants to textiles and church mosaic floors. In gold cross pendants, which served as amulets whose material reinforced the function of the formula, the text, mostly hidden from view but in contact with the body, had a predominantly private meaning. According to the author, however, even in public spaces, such as churches, the formula, by appearing in more restricted areas or in discreet positions, retained its personal character, engaging viewers in a more intimate way. Paweł Nowakowski's chapter ("And the Word Was Made of Flesh": Greek and Aramaic Inscriptions as Substitutes for the Physical Presence of Benefactors in Eastern Christian Sanctuaries') shows how late antique dedicatory inscriptions made up of only personal names and prayers for salvations, placed in holy enclosures of limited access, directly on stone reliquaries, or carved in holy caves, were not intended to be read or seen by most people, but embodied the perpetual presence of the named individuals near or in physical contact with the source of holiness from which they expected to benefit. All three case studies concern inscriptions that were not meant to be seen by human eyes, where, in the first two instances, the material features of the artifacts added to the meaning of the text, while, in the third, it was the inscription that acted as a substitute for the material presence of the named individuals.

Finally, in Section V 'Texts that Move through Media—Greek Literary and Inscriptional Epigram,' the focus is on the materiality of literary epigrams. Joseph W. Day ('Elegy, Epigram, and the Complementarity of Text and Monument') argues that the success of the elegiac couplet as the predominant epigraphic meter from the sixth century BCE onward was due to its specific textual features, such as the use of a dialogic grammar, emotional language, and the ability to frame visual images. These characteristics made elegiac epigrams best suited to complement the objects on which they were inscribed and to engage passersby in a dialogue with them. Sherry (Chiayi) Lee ('From Courtesans, to Goddesses. The Materialization of Ritual Practice in Nossis's Votive Epigrams') demonstrates how three Hellenistic epigrams by the Locrian poetess Nossis, which purport to be dedicatory inscriptions for votive objects offered to Aphrodite by female worshippers, play with epigrammatic language to prompt readers to perceive the materiality of the artifacts described in the text, as well as the space and ritual practice to which those artifacts were supposed to belong, i.e., the celebration of the Adonia festival at Locri. Federica Scicolone's chapter ('Strategies of Ocular and Imaginary Deixis in Greek Epigrams') analyzes selected examples of Hellenistic and Imperial epigraphic and literary epigrams in which deictic language draws attention to real or imaginary artifacts and their context of display to argue how literary fiction could affect the audience's perception of the materiality of inscribed texts and their environment as well as the human experience of ritual and cultic practices. The three case studies complement each other quite effectively: while the first explains how elegiac epigrams and the materiality of the artifacts on which they were inscribed guided the audience's response to them, the second and third show how literary epigrams and their roots in the epigraphic practice enabled readers to mentally evoke the materiality of fictional artifacts.

The volume is also notable for the presence of extensive bibliographies at the end of each chapter, a general index, and a rich apparatus of figures conveniently incorporated within each chapter, which proves essential for the fruition of the subjects under discussion.

In conclusion, this collection of works is a welcome addition to scholarship on the materiality of inscribed texts and is certainly a must-read for scholars interested in this topic, destined, as it is, to elicit further discussion and analysis of the many issues and case studies it explores.

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