A ROMAN TOWN IN ANDALUSIA

S. KEAY, J. CREIGHTON, J. R. RODRIGUEZ (edd.): *Celti Peñaflor. The Archaeology of a Hispano-Roman Town in Baetica*. Pp. xii + 252, ills. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000. Paper. ISBN: 1-84217-035-X.

This collaborative volume is a primarily archaeological work dealing with recent excavations at ancient Celti (the modern Peñaflor in Andalusia). The first chapter gives a description of the site and a history of previous work there. The following chapters deal with the excavations undertaken by the authors and their results, discussing the field survey, the excavations *per se*, ceramic and non-ceramic finds, the environmental evidence (mainly dealing with diet) found on the site, and an analysis of the wall plaster found. There is also a chapter on epigraphy which provides a supplement, and at times a corrective, to the inscriptions from Celti listed by Gonzalez, *Corpus de Inscripciones Latinas de Andalucia II: Sevilla I. La Vega* (Seville, 1991). Oddly this catalogue does not include the fragmentary inscriptions found in the authors' excavations which are listed in the chapter on non-ceramic finds. The book concludes with a chapter dealing with possible reconstructions of the major building encountered during the excavations and one giving an 'archaeological history' of the site, the latter slightly overlapping with the initial chapter. A copious bibliography is provided, though its arrangement is at times confusing. The illustrations are of good quality, but one set of figures (1.4.1–1.4.6), while mentioned in the text, seems to have been omitted from final publication.

All the chapters are meticulously detailed, but at the same time they are readable for those unversed in the technical areas in which they deal. What emerges from them is a picture both of the tenacity of local culture at the site and of the impact of Rome. Local pottery is seen to persist into the Roman Imperial period and not be entirely extinct at the end of it; dietary habits too were slow to change. On the other hand, Pye's chapter notes that the wall plaster found at Celti was certainly not that of a 'provincial backwater'. The epigraphy of the town also reflects Latin culture, albeit, as Keay notes, the burghers of Celti displayed considerable reluctance in adopting the 'epigraphic habit', as the first extant inscriptions from the town date to the late first century A.D. Remesal seems rather romantic in asserting that the carving of *Prixilla* for *Priscilla* on one stone reflects local pronunciation, as this shift is common throughout the empire. Some confusion is present in the treatment of *Celtitanus* and *Celtitana*. In inscription 8, *Celtitana* is treated, as one would expect, as a toponymic adjective, yet in inscription 14 it is treated as a *cognomen*, though no compelling reason is given for this divergent approach. Aficionados of Roman Britain will be delighted to find a Barathes in Celti marrying a local girl, giving an interesting parallel to the Barates of South Shields. Despite his name, however, Remesal does not speculate about the origin of Barathes, nor on the possibility that his wife Baetica may well be a public freedwoman.

The major find of the excavations was a peristyle structure constructed in the mid- to late first century A.D. which was later turned into two peristyle houses (or perhaps one property with two peristyles). The authors are firm in their belief that the former structure was the town's *forum*. Nevertheless their comments are objective and put forward the difficulties, as well as the advantages of such a view and alternatives to it. Some readers may conclude that the site is that of a large private house. Much is made of the legal difficulties of the demolition of a *forum*. This, of course, begs the question of interpretation, and it is admitted that these would only have been severe if an area dedicated to the gods was involved, which begs a further question (the laws cited on

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demolition applied to private as much as public buildings). Surprisingly, there is little discussion of whether the putative *forum*'s demolition in the early third century reflects the beginning of the process of civic structures becoming weaker in the later Roman period.

In all, this monograph gives a rounded picture of our knowledge of this provincial Spanish town, but also raises interesting and important points about the nature of 'Romanization' in general and as such deserves a wide readership.

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INSCRIPTIONS FOR ANCIENT HISTORIANS

J. BODEL (ed.): *Epigraphic Evidence. Ancient History from Inscriptions.* Pp. xxvi + 246, 23 ills. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. Paper, £14.99. ISBN: 0-415-11624-4.

John Bodel's *Epigraphic Evidence* promises to introduce to 'non-specialist readers . . . *some* of the ways in which inscriptions contribute to the study of ancient history' (my emphasis). The collection achieves this, but will sometimes leave the non-specialist a little perturbed. For the authors of the thematic chapters in this volume, the task of introducing to such an audience language and culture (M. Parca), onomastics and prosopography (O. Salomies), family and society (R. Saller), civic and religious life (J. Rives), and the inscribed ancient economy (G. Pucci) was no small task. This is a book of less than 250 pages. The authors have their own special areas of interest. It is no surprise, therefore, that some areas of ancient history receive a lighter touch, as indeed B. implies.

The book is a useful introduction to many of the problems that the historian must be aware of when dealing with epigraphical evidence. The importance of studying inscriptions in context is a feature not only of B.'s approach (p. 5) but those of the other contributors too (e.g. Rives on lists of councillors at Athens, p. 126). B.'s far-ranging introductory chapter deals well with methodological problems (pp. 46–56; as do other chapters—see esp. Salomies, p. 73; Saller, p. 97) and themes which apply equally to Greek and Roman epigraphy: epigraphical habit or culture (pp. 6–15), orality and literacy (pp. 15–19), monumental form or symbolism (pp. 19–30). That most pervasive genre, funerary inscriptions, receives individual attention (pp. 30–41).

A common problem for those who wish to use epigraphical material is the relative inaccessibility of the evidence. Inscriptions appear in many parts of the ancient world and publications can be available only to the more complete research libraries. Such geographic diversity produces 'a micro-cosmically variegated galaxy of epigraphic behaviors' (p. 7). B.'s book suffers from the (unavoidable) use of technical terms. Would a glossary not have been useful? Can anything be done about the accumulation of abbreviations in epigraphy? Probably not. But the piling up of references to inscriptions, which most readers are never likely to or be able to consult, is worrying. (The expanding community of students learning about ancient history does not always read Greek and Latin, unfortunately.) B.'s volume illuminates the dark recesses of epigraphical material for a wider audience and *Epigraphic Evidence* is a worthy addition to the ancient historian's bookshelf.

If there is a complaint, and this from someone who (still) works almost exclusively on Athens, it is that the epigraphy of Greece, and especially pre-Hellenistic Greece, is sometimes underexploited. The non-specialist student who takes up this book will gain

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