Daniel Perret (ed.), *Writing for Eternity: A Survey of Epigraphy in Southeast Asia*. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient [Études Thématiques 30], 2018, 479 pp., ISBN: 9782855391502, price: EUR 40.00 (paperback).

This collection of eighteen essays is a welcome addition to the field of Southeast Asian epigraphy, which has experienced a revival in the last two decades after a long period of relative dormancy. In the preface, the editor envisages “non-specialists, especially students” (p. 7) as its major readership; yet I am sure that scholars—including epigraphists—will find this book useful and will consult it regularly.

This book covers both the mainland and insular Southeast Asia, but does not explore all epigraphic corpora from the region: there is no essay on Old Cham nor Old Balinese epigraphy, which would certainly deserve to be covered. It is conveniently divided into three parts, using the type of script as the major dissecting line: Indian-derived scripts, Chinese script, and Arabic-derived scripts. The first part mostly contains short surveys of epigraphical corpora of Southeast Asia, covering Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, the Khmer epigraphical corpus, the epigraphical culture of the Mons, Old Javanese, and Old Malay. It furthermore contains two theoretical surveys of the historiography of epigraphy in Nusantara. The second part offers an overview of Chinese epigraphic studies in Southeast Asia and a discussion of Vietnamese inscriptions, also written in Chinese-derived script. The third part offers two fine studies on the earliest Islamic inscriptions from Southeast Asia and an interesting essay by Roderick Orlina on the Sulu epigraphy.

Although all essays collected in this book deserve attention, for most bring new information, my expertise is limited to insular Southeast Asia, especially Java and Bali, so that I will restrict my comments to the contributions on insular Southeast Asia. However, I must briefly mention two contributions on the Khmer epigraphy, because I find them particularly informative and well-argued for the non-specialist readers. The first is a short essay by Dominik Soutif, which gives a clear description of the CIK (*Corpus des inscriptions khmères*) project initiated by Gerdi Gerschheimer in 2004. The project revises and upgrades the work on Khmer inscriptions by French scholars, especially by George Coedès and Claude Jacques. Today, half of Coedès inventory of inscriptions has been re-inventoried, with more than 300 “K” numbers added to his original study (p. 156). Strikingly, new and undocumented epigraphical documents are still discovered in well-researched Khmer sanctuaries, especially inscriptions on recycled blocks that were revealed after infrastructural decay or “inscriptions that were so prominently visible that no one thought of recording them, as they were considered previously inventoried” (p. 153). Among the never recor-

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ded epigraphical documents, Soutif lists recently published inscriptions from Prasat Neak Buos and Prasat Khna. Inscriptions K. 1248 and K. 1312, which are easily visible on doorjambs, have remained unnoticed for more than a century.

Julia Estève gives us concise information on the multiple uses of Khmer toponyms, a topic first explored (especially) by Michael Vickery. Estève introduces the benefits of utilizing an electronic toponymic atlas, which currently contains around 2,700 occurrences of place-names identified in approximately 1,000 inscriptions (p. 166). This resource can serve as a “religio-geospatial database that will depict its religious geography and history and help us understand its religions” (p. 165). Estève shows how by pairing the theonym found in each hermitage’s foundation inscription, we can identify and locate the temples to which they were linked (p. 171).

One of the most informative contributions is a study by Titi Surti Nastiti on Javanese border markers. In ancient Java, the term *sīma* was used in legal discourse for the territories which had tax duties to the king (or other high-ranking taxing authority), fully or partially transferred to a religious, often monastic, establishment. The establishment of a *sīma* was staged during a ritual ceremony attended by the entire village and a number of officials and guests, who served as testimonies. Permanent stone markers—at minimum four of them—were established at the boundaries. The author discusses 29 border markers, all but one having their origin in Central Java. Most of these *watu sīma* (*‘sīma stones’*) show either a *lingga* shape divided into three parts (square, octagonal, and cylindrical), or what the author calls a “pseudo-*lingga* shape” made of only two parts (p. 191). The newly-established boundaries, and often numerous other details pertaining to the ceremony, were carefully recorded in epigraphs, the so-called “*sīma* inscriptions”, which represent one of the most important historical sources for pre-Islamic Java. Titi Surti Nastiti’s careful analysis of this ceremony reads as a detailed and fascinating addition to previous studies (Naerssen 1941; Barrett Jones 1984). From the Pupus inscription (875 CE), we learn that a number of trees were planted at the newly-established border, along with permanent stone border-markers. The Panggumulan A inscription informs us that people responsible for making border stones were not ordinary craftsmen, but experts from the Dihyang area (p. 190). Titi Surti Nastiti divides border markers into three major types: inscribed *watu sīmas* in the form of stone *linggas*, inscribed *watu sīmas* on stone pseudo-*linggas*, and *watu sīmas* on stones bearing emblems. The first type was only issued between 826 and 886 CE, when “the use of *watu sīma* had become something like a trend” (p. 211). They later gave way to uninscribed *watu sīmas* in the shape of *linggas*, pseudo-*linggas*, and irregular quadrilaterals such as the marker stones for the *sīma* at Trailokyapuri

(p. 211). 31 detailed full-color photographs increase the documentary value of this study.

Hadi Sidomulyo discusses topographic data from *sīma* documents. Many of these grants, originally stone inscriptions issued before 1300 CE, were copied in the Majapahit period, and no less than fifty percent of the documentary evidence pertaining to *sīma* grants dates from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. According to the author, one of the reasons why the original epigraphs have seldom been recovered from their place of origin is that “they were removed to safety during Majapahit’s closing years, when the kingdom came under increasing pressure from the emerging Islamic polities on Java’s north coast” (p. 226). Sidomulyo offers topographical identifications of certain sites mentioned in *sīma* inscriptions, including the village of Adanadan, for which a land grant was re-issued in 1301 CE by the founder of Majapahit, Śrī Krtarājasa Jayawardhana (pp. 228–30), and a number of places mentioned in the inscription of Wāharu IV, originally issued in 931 CE (pp. 230–34). Important topographical data have also been gleaned from the inscription of Tuhañaru, issued in 1323 CE (pp. 234–36).

One of the most interesting, though rather short, essays is by Arlo Griffiths. Currently known from less than 40 (published) inscriptions and a unique manuscript from Kerinci, Old Malay is the earliest (epigraphically) documented phase of the Malay language. The author voices his hopes that Old Malay should be keenly studied in Malaysia, where Malay identity is a key socio-political factor, and in Indonesia, where a dialect of Malay serves as the matrix of the national language (p. 276). This is, however, not the case, for—unlike Old Javanese—recent studies on Old Malay have been published mostly by foreign scholars. Griffiths opens several fascinating windows into this small corpus. He offers a preliminary translation of the difficult ninth century stone inscription from the Dieng Plateau (pp. 276–78) that provides an inventory of a Śaiva temple. To Griffiths’ improved translation of several difficult words, I can add that the phrase *a(las) (ka)cangan dua* (A.3–4), translated by him as “two platters for beans” (p. 278), may rather refer to “two money-bags/bags of money”, as we gather from a passage in the Old Javanese *Bhōmāntaka*, where the term *kacangan* refers to coins stored inside a lady’s purse. Griffiths (pp. 279–80) also discusses recently discovered inscribed tin-foils from the Batang Hari River at Muara Jambi, and reportedly also from the Musi River at Palembang. These little understood documents constitute an almost entirely new genre of epigraphic material: magical spells on folded foils used as amulets. The essay is closed by a very useful “Provisional Inventory of Old Malay Inscriptions” (pp. 281–83), which lists 36 inscriptions covering the period between the late seventh century CE and 1467/8 CE.

The volume is closed by a cumulative bibliography (pp. 385–452), which—covering 68 pages—will certainly be used by many students and scholars as a quick tool to search for the most important, as well as less well-known, contributions to the field. There is also a much shorter index (pp. 455–66). The volume is in general well produced, and contains a reasonable amount of illustrations. Overall, the book has something for everyone, and it is written with knowledge, enthusiasm, and wit. As a result, it is also a valuable scholarly contribution: specialists will no doubt choose to benefit from or disagree with particular points that authors make, thus further stimulating and advancing the study of Southeast Asian epigraphy

Jiří Jákł

Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

jiri.jakl@uni-heidelberg.de