Epigraphy has long been neglected as a field of interest for classicists—a habit that did not come out of nowhere, as we are told in the introduction to this book. Fortunately, times have changed. Therefore, it is all the more to be appreciated that these sixteen contributions resulting from the 2009 conference on epigraphy and literature held in Manchester are now published together in a well-polished book on epigraphy and literature from the archaic, Hellenistic and classical periods.

The first essay by Andreas Hartmann elaborates on the ancient perceptions of inscriptions. He observes that the age of inscriptions was particularly important, since they were viewed as a direct testimony of the past. In contrast with some well-read classical historians of contemporary events, historians of more remote periods were happy to use inscriptions as a means of bringing them closer to the past that they described. The antique study of art history and epigraphy are compared: both existed, but were not yet fully developed.

Elizabeth Kosmetatou discusses the use of Delphic and Delic inventory lists by Herodotus. She opens with a discussion of Herodotus’ use of tenses and his use of the prospective imperfect. Kosmetatou’s analysis of Hdt. 1.51.1 is convincing and demonstrates a clear case in favour of the historian's use of an inventory list of the gifts of Croesus to Delphi. However, since this is the only clear example provided by Kosmetatou, it remains doubtful whether Herodotus made direct use of these lists in writing his Histories or simply worked from memory with respect to those sites that he had visited in person.

Matthias Haake investigates the use of psephismata (proposals passed by a majority of votes) in Hellenistic biographies. He discusses four examples, among which that of Hieronymus of Rhodes might be considered the most appealing. Haake argues convincingly that the Athenian psephisma cited by Hieronymus, which states that men were allowed to have two wives in times of population shortage, to rebut the accusation of bigamy against Socrates was probably based on—but not quite the same as—real psephismata on the matter. The example shows the argumentative function of psephismata in a long and fierce debate over Socrates’ moral behaviour.

The contribution by Manuela Mari offers an overview of “some uses of epigraphic sources in the ancient literary traditions on Delphi”. This quotation from the title already indicates that a real focus should not be expected, but the article provides useful ideas for further research on the topic.
Pausanias evidently cannot remain unnoticed in any book in which Greek epigraphy is discussed. Yannis Tzifopoulos points out that, for all his references to inscriptions, Pausanias did not act as an epigrapher proper and rarely questioned the authenticity and reliability of his epigraphic sources, but was dependent of them for large part of his descriptions.

The focus is on Latin inscriptions in the essay by David Langslow, who presents a catalogue of 34 references to old Latin inscriptions (i.e. until the mid-third century BC). He stresses that antique testimonies of early inscriptions should be taken very seriously, since there were more of them than we tend to think. Langslow also discusses the genre and medium of old Latin inscriptions and especially their language. He argues that morphology and spelling were adapted in references by later authors, but that the original syntax and vocabulary were maintained. Langslow assesses his material critically and (e.g.) convincingly argues that the inscription cited by Plautus in As. 259-261 was most likely based on hearsay, rather than on an actual inscription, such as the remaining inscription of more or less the same text.

Andrej Petrovic’s piece on the reception of the earliest collections of inscribed epigrams takes us back to the Greek. He points to the fact that, remarkably, epigrams are often quoted by classical orators and suggests that the audience for them should therefore be sought in the public courts of the fifth and fourth centuries. The collections of epigrams that emerged in the fourth century probably were the source of these quotations. In general, although Petrovic’s case is clear, the fact that after all only five epigrams were found in the oeuvres of Lycurgus, Aeschines and Demosthenes makes it hard to evaluate his larger conclusions about epigrams and their collections.

The second part of the book—on inscriptions and literature—opens with an essay by Joseph Day on the role of epigraphy in epinician texts of the fifth century. He argues that inscriptions ‘repeat’ the act they describe and compares the epigraphic signature with similar phenomena in epinician poetry. Signatures “contributed a frame to viewing”. However, I found it difficult to determine the actual impact of these signatures and the direct link with epigraphic ones as argued by the author.

David Fearn investigates the poets’ attitude towards non-poetical forms of commemoration and rightly emphasises that we should not read poetical superiority in every verse that possibly could be read as such. In contrast, poetry often completes other forms of remembrance. Fearn discusses among others Simonides (531 and 581 PMG), himself well-known as a writer of epigraphic poems.

Several categories of inscriptions in tragedy and comedy (as well as satyr plays) are discussed by Julia Lougovaya. Although she offers an interesting